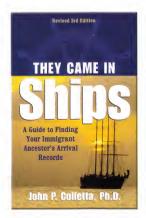


#### ▼ They Became Americans Finding Naturalization Records and Ethnic Origins

By Loretto Dennis Szucs, 260 pages, #1028
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America is a nation of immigrants. Through naturalization records, genealogists, historians, and other scholars trace the immigration stories of individuals and groups that traveled from afar to call themselves Americans. They Became Americans provides an accurate, readable, and interesting historical framework for the citizenship process. It also suggests ways of finding naturalization records and discusses the weaknesses and strengths of the different types of records.

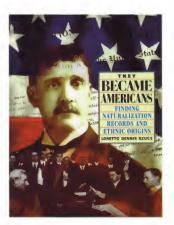


#### **▼ Ellis Island**

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By Loretto Dennis Szucs, 52 pages, #2165
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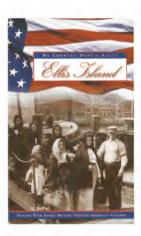


#### ▲ They Came In Ships Revised Third Edition

By John P. Colletta, Ph.D. 184 pages, #2623

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Chances are excellent that your ancestors came from another country on a ship bound for America. Do you know which country? Do you know how to find out? Author and genealogist John P. Colletta prepares you with the fundamental facts you need to know as he guides you step-by-step through the research process of looking for your immigrant ancestor. This expanded third edition of *They Came in Ships* contains expanded discussions of colonial period immigrant records and port-by-port peculiarities of the federal records.



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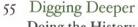
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#### Editor's Note

ot long ago, I was asked to answer some questions about family history on a radio show. As expected, the first question was, "How many people are actually interested in family history, and more importantly, why?" Previous interviews had taught me that media people want hard numbers, so I had come prepared.

My first response was taken from the American Demographics study a few years ago that cited 113 million Americans as having some interest in genealogy, and 19 million as having a strong working interest in the field. More recent studies suggest that searching for and connecting with family is one of the largest uses of the Internet. In fact, according to a TNS Intersearch survey, twenty-nine percent of Internet users worldwide have engaged in family history research or searched for lost family members in the past five years.

The 2003 numbers are even more impressive. More than 13 million people visited family history-related websites in January 2003 and more than 10 million of those people visited the MyFamily.com network of sites, which includes Ancestry.com, Genealogy.com, MyFamily.com, and RootsWeb.com (according to Jupiter Media Metrix). Throughout 2003, MyFamily.com sites continued to see more than 10 million visitors each month.

According to one source, the pre-conditions for the rising interest in genealogy was the post-1945 migrations. After World War II, Americans moved from one part of the country to another in unprecedented numbers. In The Chronicle of Higher Education, Patrick M. Quinn wrote that this "contributed to the breakdown of our relatively stable, homogenous, family-centered, culture." In earlier times, families did a better job of staying in touch, and the family lore passed down naturally from old to young; "one didn't have to do research to learn about one's ancestors; they were usually close by, dead and alive." ("The Surge of Interest in Genealogy Reflects a Populist Stand with Important Implications for our Culture," May 22, 1991). Quinn also points out that as distances between family members increased, family traditions ceased to be transmitted.

An experience I had with a class of seventh graders last year validates the staggering statistics and brings the reason for why people are interested in family history close to home. Given the assignment of compiling a "family book" by year's end, each student was to interview parents and grandparents and include as many photos and illustra-

tions as possible, as well as an interview transcription of at least one older person. Some students

turned in simple scrapbooks, others had made sophisticated computer-generated books. Each one included touching dedication pages in which parents and grandparents were thanked for their help. I won't soon forget the brief highlights three students related about their year-long projects.

One boy from a broken family said that he had never before been allowed to speak with his grandfather who lived in another state. Because of the project, however, his father had allowed him to make a long-distance phone call. The boy beamed as he told of his new-found bond with a relative he had never known. A girl with tears in her eyes described her grandmother's experience in a labor camp during World War II—a story the girl hadn't known before. Another young boy reminded me of the urgency of our work. It was hard for me to keep the tears back when he admitted that he didn't really want to interview anyone and hadn't liked the project at first, but that he was glad he had participated after all. His beloved grandfather had unexpectedly died the day following the interview. Because of the assignment, he and the rest of the family had learned things they would not have otherwise known.

So how many people are actually interested in family history these days, and more importantly, why? It may take hard numbers to prove the interest level, but it only takes moments like these to see that family connectedness, family bonds, family unity are the fundamental answers to why so many people are becoming interested in the search for their roots. 🔊

Loretto D. Szucs

Executive Editor lszucs@myfamilyinc.com

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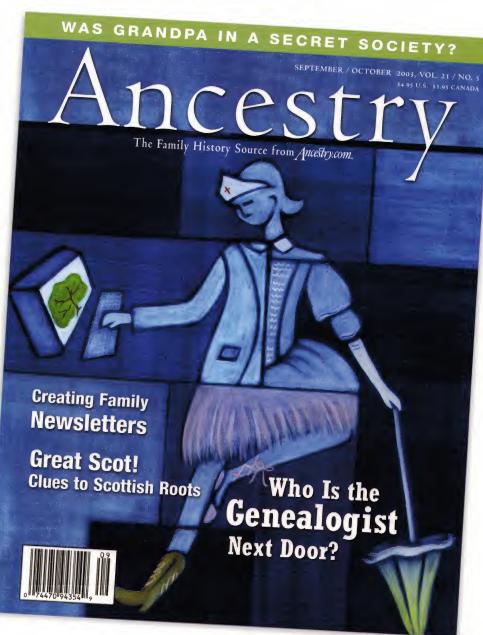
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#### What are the creative ways you've displayed your family history research?

#### Wall Maps of Immigrant Family

This past summer I painted a map on my dining room wall that spans from Ireland to Germany/Prussia. All of my husband's and my immigrant ancestors came from that area. As I find the immigrants and the location of their hometowns, I add that information to the map. If I have a photo of that person, I hang it close to the hometown.

The map is a work in progress and inspires me to continue my research. Whenever we entertain, the map and pictures spark interesting conversation. The best part is that the next generations can easily see the lands of their ancestors in relation to one another. Recently, I located two villages of two different family lines—they were just five miles from one another!

Linda Keene Plainfield, Illinois

#### Other Uses for Shower Curtains

Since I noticed that people started looking at their watches and the exit door when I brought out my big binders and fold-out charts, I decided to look for a better way. I saw an exhibit at a genealogy fair that featured a clear shower curtain with lines drawn with magic marker and names on the lines. It wasn't what I wanted to hang in my home, but it gave me an idea.

After much thought, my husband and I came up with our Sunburst Genealogy Charts. We can display up to ten generations on a 36" x 36" square of bond paper. Since the lineages are clearly shown, it is very easy for anyone to see the work completed. We love it.

Alice Volkert

#### Family Photos on the Walls

Most of my research was started to put names to the pictures of my family archives collection. I have hundreds of pictures dating back to the 1850s. I covered the walls of my den with the pictures. Everyone loves to look at the stern faces and old-fashioned clothing my ancestors wore, and my children want to know who these people are and how they fit into our family. The back of each picture is labeled with the identity of the person and a descendancy record down to my children; now my kids know just where they fit in!

Mimi Malcolm Toledo, Ohio

#### A Bookcase for Photos

I have a three-shelf bookcase in my living room I use to display family history. On the top shelf are photographs of my daughter, my husband and I, and my parents. The middle shelf has photographs of her great-grandparents and their siblings. On the bottom shelf are the great-great-grandparents and their siblings. Thankfully, we have a rather small family so the photos all fit in that space.

The photos have been on display since my daughter was a young girl, and she now knows her family genealogy. The bookcase also makes for interesting discussions when friends come to visit, and I know several people who have taken up this fascinating hobby as a result of viewing our family photos.

Gail Rysso

#### Our "Mini Tree"

For as long as I can remember, my mother has displayed five photographs

in a "mini tree." She placed her and Dad's wedding portrait in the middle. Since I look like Dad and my sister looks like Mom, my picture is on Dad's side with the portrait of his parents while my sister and the portrait of Mom's parents are on the other side. For the last thirty years, the photographs have formed a wide W at eye level to fill up a long hallway.

Now Mom wants to use many of the old family photographs to expand the tree to include more generations and siblings.

> Sandra Halouska Columbus, Georgia

#### Paint a Tree, Label a Photo

A family history project I plan to do one day is to paint a tree on a wall in my home (I have always thought a hallway would be the best). Then I'll hang a photo of each of my children's grandparents, great-grandparents, and in some cases the great-great-grandparents. Each photo will be labeled with information on the person. I don't have photos of the great-greatgreat-grandparents, but I want to put names for the remaining generations even though I don't have their photos. In one case I do have the photos. I want this for my kids to see on a regular basis.

Judith Hughes

#### **Readers' Voices Question**

What are some of the unique ways you've taught family history to your children?

Please e-mail your response to Readers' Voices < editoram@ancestry.com > .

#### What's New at MyFamily.com, Inc.

#### **Immigrant Records Online at Ancestry.com**

MyFamily.com, Inc. recently announced the launch of the U.S. Immigration Collection, a unique resource providing international and immigration-focused content in one convenient, growing online research tool. Available as a subscription through Ancestry.com, the U.S. Immigration Collection provides a dynamic resource for discovering information about an ancestor's first steps on the land of their hopes and dreams.

"The United States is a country founded on immigration. Immigrants dreaming of better lives found their way to these shores in crowded ships—fleeing war, disease, poverty, and famine," said Tom Stockham, president and CEO of MyFamily.com, Inc. "When America called, more than 57 million individuals answered, flourishing despite the odds. This means it doesn't take long for many people to run into a foreign-born ancestor as they trace their family history. Today, MyFamily.com is making the search for immigrant ancestors easier."

This ever-growing online resource will give subscribers continuous access to new information and names, making the new subscription increasingly valuable to the family history researcher. Anyone can now conveniently

search for ancestors who may have emigrated from many countries to multiple ports in the United States during a five-century period.

Currently, the U.S. Immigration Collection includes passenger lists for all of America's major Atlantic ports. Today, more than 10 million individuals whose names appear in ships' passenger lists, port arrivals, and naturalization records are included in the collection. These records allow researchers to pinpoint an ancestor's homeland and learn more about their journey to America. The records contain valuable information such as the immigrant's name, names of family members, dates of vital events, port and date of arrival, and much more.

Some of the records found in the U.S. Immigration Collection include:

• The New York Passenger Lists, 1851–1892. Likely the most significant genealogical resource for tracing immigrant ancestors to the United States, this database will ultimately cover more than 11 million immigrants spanning over forty years. Eighty percent of all immigrants to America in this time period came through the port of New York. Available online

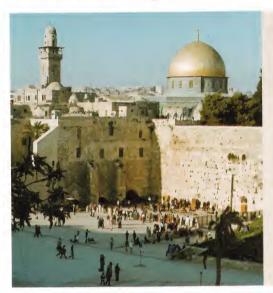
exclusively at Ancestry.com, the New York Passenger Lists have been indexed by name for the first time, making it possible to search for ancestors by name. View the actual passenger list images and see who traveled with your ancestors.

Passenger and Immigration
Lists Index, 1500s–1900s.
This database covers the
broadest time period and
geography including all U.S.
and Canadian ports. Includes
exclusive and hard to find
records such as naturalization
records, church records, family
and local histories, voter registrations, census records, land
records, personal diaries, and
more.

The U.S. Immigration Collection will continue to grow as more names and records are added weekly, growing to well over 25 million names in the collection in the coming year. This collection can be accessed online at <www.ancestry.com>. It is available to subscribers for \$19.95 monthly, \$39.95 quarterly, or a \$79.95 annual fee. Current Ancestry.com subscribers can add the new annual subscription to their account for only \$39.95.



#### Community



#### Jewish Genealogy Conference in Jerusalem

If you've got Jewish heritage, mark your summer calendar for July 4–9. That week, the twenty-fourth international conference of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) will be held at the Renaissance Jerusalem Hotel. Genealogists interested in tracing their Jewish heritage will find such subjects as holocaust research, language and paleography workshops, beginner training, family stories, and early immigration to Eretz, Israel.

In addition to providing a broad range of research topics, this conference will focus on numerous parts of the world, such as Canada, Poland, Russia, India, and Australia. Conference attendees will be granted research opportunities, including special access to the Jewish Agency Search Bureau for Missing Relatives. Tours in Israel will be available before and after the conference. For more information, visit the conference website at <www.ortra.com/jgen2004/>.

#### Memoirs for Family Historians

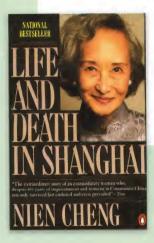
Have you considered reading a memoir to inspire you in your genealogy quest? From famous stories you've wanted to better understand, to dramatic stories of courage, to well-written stories of an ordinary person's everyday life, these books demonstrate the power of personal histories. Following is a sampling of memoirs you might want to check out.

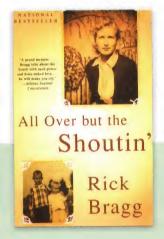
Nien Cheng's Life and Death in Shanghai depicts the author's struggle to stay alive and maintain her self-respect during China's cultural revolution. In All Over but the Shoutin', readers learn how author Rick Bragg depended on his mother's strength while he grew up in a poor family in the South.

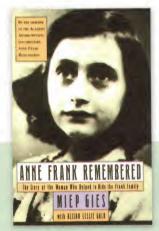
Lalita Tademy left her job as a vice president of Sun Microsystems to unearth the stories and records that would explain her family's history. Her two-year journey resulted in *Cane River*, a powerful account detailing the experiences of four women, all of whom were born into slavery.

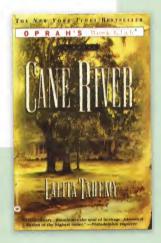
October Sky, a heartwarming story that was adapted to film in 1999, details the events of Homer Hickam's rocket-building days in a West Virginia mining town. Other books by Hickam include The Coalwood Way and Sky of Stone.

The Diary of Anne Frank has been widely read for decades, but Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family provides a new perspective on the Franks' inspirational story. Author Miep Gies relates how she and her husband supported the Frank family and others who were hiding from Nazi officials.









## Family History Helps on msn.com

ave you been looking for another website that will offer tips for genealogy research? Do you enjoy reading about the family trees of celebrities? Point your Web browser to Family Roots on MSN.com. This Ancestry-partnered website offers pointers on current genealogy topics such as collateral line genealogy; Jewish, African American, or Asian American roots; involving children in genealogy; and recording your family history.

Beginners to family history research can find articles to help them get started, and seasoned researchers can uncover new ideas for breaking through brick walls. Though the site features nononsense articles on the significance of birth, marriage, and death records, it also offers information on lighter topics such as celebrity family trees. You can even find tips on making a creative family tree. Visit the site at <a href="http://family.msn.com/frs">http://family.msn.com/frs</a>.





### Groundhog Day

For more than one hundred years, Punxsutawney Phil has popped his head out of his hole on February 2nd to determine how soon winter will end. Though Americans have become accustomed to the tradition, the legend behind the yearly forecast did not originate in Punxsquatawney, Pennsylvania.

Groundhog Day has been passed down from a centuries-old tradition associated with early Christian beliefs that the weather on Candlemas Day would decide if winter was over or if it would be twice as long. An old Scottish couplet states, "If Candlemas Day is bright and clear, there'll be two winters in the year."

It appears that the Romans brought the Candlemas tradition to the Germans during their conquests, and the Germans connected this tradition with hedgehogs. Pennsylvania's early German settlers considered the groundhog a sensible animal, claiming, "For as the sun shines on Candlemas Day, So far will the snow swirl until the May." The "sensible" groundhog has thus become the traditional yearly weather forecaster.

In addition to the lore surrounding Groundhog Day, Phil and his yearly forecast have received some unique hype in the last several decades. Here are a few examples:

- 1940 The first Groundhog Day Queen, Margaret Hunam, poses for a picture with Phil.
- 1955 Phil debuts on three television stations.
- 1958 Phil prepares to blast off in the "Chucknik" spacecraft. This will be his first of two trips to the moon.
- 1986 President Reagan entertains Phil in the White House in March.
- 1992 Bill Murray visits Punxsutawney to prepare for his new film, *Groundhog Day*, which is released the following year.
- 2001 The JumboTron in New York's Times Square features Phil's forecast live.

The website at <www.groundhog.org> offers details on the events and activities surrounding Groundhog Day. It even lists each of Punxsutawney Phil's predictions since 1887.

### Genetic Research: How Did Billy the Kid Die?

The Innocence Project, a non-profit organization, has used post-conviction DNA testing to establish the innocence of 138 convicted felons. Now, DNA technology may be able to determine how the infamous Billy the Kid actually died. The most popular theory to date is that Billy the Kid was shot and killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett, but in 1937 and 1950, two other men came forward and claimed that they were Billy the Kid.

The remains of Catherine Antrim, Billy the Kid's mother, are buried in Silver City, New Mexico, and the remains of her famous son are believed to be buried in Fort Sumter, New Mexico. Two New Mexico sheriffs, along with the mayor of Capitan, New Mexico, have asked that the remains of Billy the Kid, the two other claimants to his name, and Catherine Antrim (the mother of Billy the Kid) be exhumed. Catherine's DNA will be compared with that of the three men, and a decision will hopefully be reached.

But what if none of the men's DNA matches Catherine's? Leon Metz, an El Paso historian, says that because graves have been shifted over the years, the remains of Billy the Kid and even Catherine Antrim may not reside in their marked graves. The mayors of Fort Sumter and Silver City strongly oppose the idea of disturbing these famous graves, citing a possible downturn in the tourism that both towns depend on.

For now, the DNA examination remains a hot debate, one that will likely not be resolved soon. More information on the Innocence Project can be found on the organization's website at <www.innocenceproject.org>.



## Martin Luther King Day An Opportunity for Service

ince 1986, the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has been recognized as a national holiday. This year's celebration on January 19th will mark Dr. King's seventy-fifth birthday. To commemorate the day, individuals are encouraged to give service in their communities in an effort to continue the legacy left by the civil rights leader.

The website <www.mlkday.org> lists suggestions for service that include removing graffiti from a building and painting a mural, helping at a day camp for children with working parents, holding a workshop on Dr. King's life, creating craft projects for children in hospitals, and serving meals at a homeless shelter. The

website also offers a toolkit in Acrobat format (.pdf) that lists helpful suggestions for those who would like to organize projects.

For ideas specifically related to genealogical service, check out "Hosted Volunteer Projects" on <www.rootsweb.com>. As you participate in a service project this January 19th, remember Martin Luther King's famous statement: "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve."



#### Photo Corner

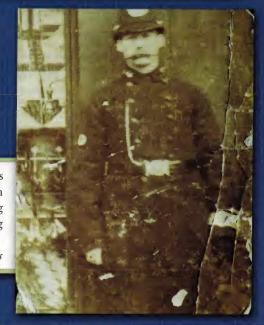


This 1930 photo is of my maternal grandmother, Edna V. Baum, and eight of her sales girls from the Stark Dry Goods Company in Canton, Ohio. She was head of the lingerie department. The girls are modeling some of the loungewear in vogue at that time.

-submitted by James P. Loomis

This ca. 1907 photograph is of my great-grandfather Joseph Abbots who was a sergeant for the City of Birmingham Police Force in England from 1894 to 1920. He achieved four bravery awards during that time: two for stopping runaway horses, one for capturing a gang of thieves, and another for rendering first aid.

-submitted by Barry John Abbots



Would you like to see a favorite photo of your ancestors in Ancestry? Now you can submit your photos to Photo Corner. Submissions should include your name, contact information, date of photo, who is pictured, and a short description. Please do not submit a photo of living persons without their written consent. Mail a quality duplicate (no photocopies or originals) to Ancestry Magazine 360 West 4800 North, Provo, UT 84604, or e-mail a 300 DPI TIFF scan to <editoram@ancestry.com>. Submissions become the property of *Ancestry* Magazine. You will be contacted if your photo is chosen.

#### **Book View**

#### They Came in Ships, revised 3rd edition

By John P. Colletta, Ph.D. Ancestry Publishing, 2003. 167 pages. Softcover. \$12.95 plus s/h. Order at <www.ancestry.com>.

With his trademark style and humor, author John Phillip Colletta outlines the necessary information you will need to begin your search for your immigrant ancestors in *They Came in Ships*.

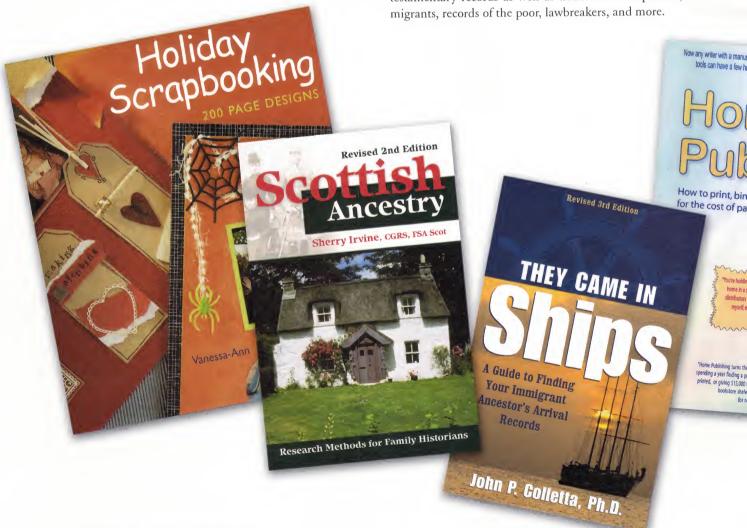
You will find essential information on passenger lists before and after 1820 at Ellis Island and other ports of entry. Since many passenger lists have not been indexed, this book contains information on searching unindexed years as well as those passenger lists not at the National Archives. A handy two-page chart in the back of the book will take you through the basic steps of finding the passenger list you need.

#### Scottish Ancestry: Research Methods for Family Historians, revised 2nd edition

By Sherry Irvine, CGRS, FSA Scot. Ancestry Publishing, 2003. 251 pages. Softcover. \$19.5 plus s/h. Order at <www.ancestry.com>.

Author and genealogist Sherry Irvine thoroughly discusses everything you need to know for Scottish family research in this revised, second edition of *Scottish Ancestry: Research Methods for Family Historians*.

She begins with civil registration searches (in Edinburgh, with ScotlandsPeople, and at FamilySearch) as well as manual searches, and the improvements to using GROS census and other census records. Use of the records of the Church of Scotland, the Secessionists, and other denominations is covered as well as examining tax records and the registry of deeds. The author discusses the online index to testaments and how to access testamentary records as well as trades and occupations, migrants, records of the poor, lawbreakers, and more.

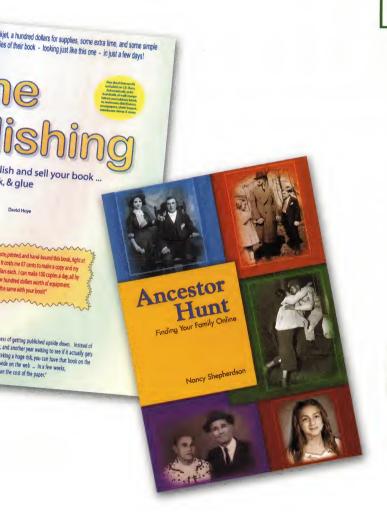


#### **Holiday Scrapbooking**

By Vanessa Ann. Sterling Publishing, 2003. 128 pages. Hardcover. \$24.95 plus s/h. Order at <www.chapelleltd.com>.

For individuals and families who wish to record special occasions with an extra flair, *Holiday Scrapbooking* offers 200 full-color page designs complete with supply lists for birthdays and major holidays, including New Year's, Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's and Father's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, and Kwanzaa.

The author briefly discusses the use and effects of adhesives and dimensional objects, such as beads, buttons, brads, and ribbons. Journaling is also discussed, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of handwritten versus computer-generated journaling. Helpful hints are sprinkled throughout the book.



#### **Home Publishing**

By David Hoye. Level Press, 2003. 225 pages. Softcover. \$19.95 plus s/h. To order, call (877) 712–8100.

For writers who have a book but no publisher, this book may be a resource to consult. In *Home Publishing*, author David Hoye describes how to make your own books at home using electrostatic copiers, inkjet printers, or offset printing presses.

Hoye discusses ink, adhesives, colors, duplex copying, binding, marketing, packing, and shipping—in short, everything writers need to know about creating their own books and making them available—without a publisher. Although little attention is given to the writing process itself, some hints are given to help writers tackle the organization of the whole book.

#### **Ancestor Hunt: Finding Your Family Online**

By Nancy Shepherdson. 144 pages. Hardcover. \$29.50 plus s/h. Order at <www.scholasticlibrary.com>.

Ancestor Hunt: Finding Your Family Online is a resource for adolescents who are just starting to become interested in their ancestors. While the focus of the book is on Internet research, the book begins with the suggestion that readers gather information by interviewing living relatives. Instructions are also given on contacting other researchers through message boards and e-mail lists and researching ancestors through search engines. The chapter on offline research discusses vital records and census research, specifically how to use Soundex, although there is no mention of the many census records available online. Genealogy software programs are also discussed and ideas are given for creating your own webpages. Lots of examples and stories make the book especially fun to read, and a helpful glossary is included along with a family group sheet and research calendar to copy and use.

For more family history books and products, visit <a href="http://shops.ancestry.com">http://shops.ancestry.com</a>.

# Creating Ties That Bind

#### Family Traditions and Rituals

Very year for Thanksgiving, each member of Debbie and Stas Mintowt's family writes a short speech about what he or she has been thankful for during the past twelve months. They tie the speeches with ribbons and read them aloud at Thanksgiving dinner. The entire family participates—even the little kids.

"It's a nice way to not just breeze through the day without a thought to what it's all about," says Debbie. "Plus, we keep the speeches for memories."

Debbie and Stas have created a simple family tradition that works as an important family ritual on two levels: First, their thoughtful custom brings the family together in an activity that affirms their common values and their love for one another. Second, because the family keeps all the speeches after the holiday is over, they're creating an archive of family events, thoughts, and feelings that future generations of the Mintowt clan will be able to enjoy.

Ritual and tradition are important elements of human life. Traditions connect the participants in a common endeavor (such as being a family) with a common goal. As folklorist Steven J. Zeitlin says, "Traditions are glue, the common ground around which a family revolves."

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## Iraditions

Strong family traditions are one way of building a powerful family bond. Amid the rapid pace, constant flux, and uncertainty of contemporary life, it's reassuring to have traditions that a family can depend on always to remain the same. If those traditions have been passed down from earlier generations, so much the better; a family's sense of connection to their forebears is enhanced. But it's never too late to create new family traditions that your children can pass on to your grandchildren.

#### A Link to History

Just as many cultural and religious traditions symbolize historical events, family traditions can evoke a family's roots. The Smithsonian folklore collection includes Kathy Kundla Crosby's story of how her family stayed connected to its Russian Slovak heritage. She talks of going with her family to her grandparents' house for Christmas Eve dinner as a child. Before they ate dinner, the entire group would kneel and pray in Slovak. Then the youngest child in the family would sit in a basket filled with straw, to represent the Christ child.

Traditions that continue customs started by your forebears are priceless. They link you to your relatives in a real and palpable way, creating an appreciation of their lives and an awareness of their legacies for you and your kin. If you don't already have handed-down traditions in your family, do some family history research to get started. Interviewing older family members can unlock many details about family

If you don't uncover any specific family traditions in your research, use what you do know about your ancestors to create new rituals. Do you have Swedish or Finnish ancestry somewhere in your lineage? Start a Saint Lucia ceremony in your family. Is your family of African descent? Consider celebrating Kwanzaa, the holiday that celebrates African culture.

There's no reason to limit yourself to rituals from your own ethnic background either. If you're of Polish descent but find something about holiday traditions from Mexico that you really like, try some with your family. The main idea is to have traditions that everyone will enjoy participating in year after year.

#### Keeping the Faith

Religious rituals are a major source of family traditions and can be adapted to meet the needs of your family. An example is the Jewish family that celebrates the Seder, the ritual dinner that begins the eight-day holiday of Passover.

The family starts not with the story of the Jews leaving Egypt, as is traditional, but with the family's stories of the exodus of the father's ancestors from Russia and of the mother's from Germany. The family incorporates the religious message of the traditional text into a retelling of their own family history.

Religious customs can be ideal springboards for creating family traditions. Incorporating church rituals into the fabric of family life lends a spiritual dimension to daily living and serves as a thread to a divine element that many families find vital. Think about which rituals from your religious tradition are most meaningful to you (or from a spiritual tradition that you find appealing, if you don't belong to an organized religion), and then consider ways to "secularize" these customs and weave them into your family activities.

#### Aunt Gertrude's Goulash

Many family rituals and traditions involve special foods prepared for special occasions. Having a distinctive menu for family gatherings—whether it's a holiday or just a family event—strengthens the familial bond and fosters an important sense of continuity.

My family, for instance, always has the same dessert on Christmas Day: an old-fashioned English plum pudding with a sweet, creamy sauce, a tradition carried over from my family's English and Scottish forebears. Folklorist Annie Hatch remembers the "money cakes" she and her brothers enjoyed on their birthdays growing up. "Mom would add coins to the batter before baking," Annie explains. Sometimes her mother was able to make sure the birthday child got the piece of cake with the best coin (a quarter) in it.

Although it may seem like a minor part of family rituals, eating the same foods on special occasions can create a welcome sense of familiarity and tradition in a family. There are a number of ways to create this ritual in your own family.

If certain holiday and special-event foods already exist in your clan, you're ahead of the game. Make sure you record the recipes and learn how to make the dishes if someone else in the family has been the keeper of the recipes (and the chef). Don't be afraid to adapt or replace foods that have lost their popularity in the family over the years. If your family doesn't have a tradition of customary foods to eat on holidays, this is your chance to flex your creative muscle and come up with menu traditions that will work in your family.

#### One on One

In the hustle and bustle of daily family life, it's easy for some kids to feel lost in the shuffle; even an only child can feel that he or she doesn't get enough time alone with Mom or Dad. Activities that include all the members of the family are important for uniting the entire clan, but it's also important to create traditions that allow each parent to bond individually with each child in the family.

There are many ways to make a tradition that creates and preserves a bond between a parent and child. Many fathers will take their sons hunting or fishing as a "male bonding"

ritual, but if these activities don't suit you, consider a hike in the mountains or a bike trip. One woman has fond memories of making pancakes with her father on Sunday mornings; another mother has begun a movie night with her teenage daughter once a month. The possibilities are endless; the goal is to find something you both enjoy doing together, and then keep doing it.

#### 'Tis a Gift to Be Simple

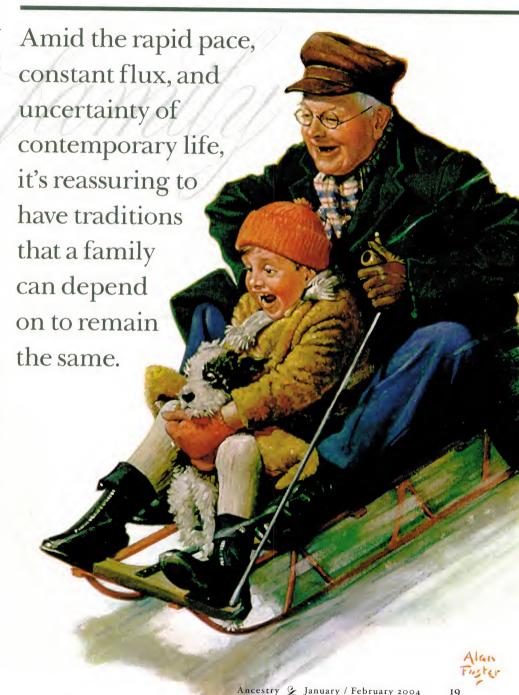
Traditions and rituals aren't only for holidays and special occasions, and they don't have to be elaborate. Incorporating small rituals into the daily functioning of a family draws everyone closer together.

Daily. Starting supper with a prayer can set a warm and respectful tone for the meal, allowing everyone to leave the day's aggravations behind and focus on good food and conversation. Even a simple moment of silence can serve as a break from the toil of the day and an opportunity for quiet reflection.

Some families let dinner talk chart its own course. Others organize supper conversations around certain topics. One idea is to assign each family member the job of choosing and researching a

Illustration by Alan Foster, ©1930 SEPS: Licensed by Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN. All rights reserved. www.curtispublishing.com current-events topic he or she finds interesting; then, when it's that person's night to preside over the dinner time dialogue, the "expert" tells a little about the topic, and the rest of the family asks him or her questions about the subject. One family sets aside some dinners for talking and others at which they're allowed to read at the table. Another has a custom in which the mother or father reads to the family during dinner, with the choice of book rotating among the children.

Making family dinner a daily event, during which values, ideas, and happenings of importance to the family are dis-



## Iraditions

cussed, is invaluable for creating a sense of togetherness.

Parents of young children know that bedtime is rarely a child's favorite event. But going to bed can be a time for soothing rituals that help your children prepare their minds for a good night's rest, and give you the opportunity to let them know they are loved and protected.

One mother opens the front door at night with her toddler daughter to say good night to the trees, the stars, and the moon. On summer nights, a young father concentrates with his son on the sound of crickets as a quiet meditation and release of the day's worries.

Reading a favorite story to a child at bedtime is a wonderful and time-honored tradition in many families. A delightful variation on this is when the parent or child invents the story, extending and embellishing it night after night.

Weekly. Scheduling one night each week to spend just with the family is an easy tradition to begin—and one that pays great dividends in terms of family closeness. Whether it's a night of faith-based activity, a family meeting, an evening of fun, or a mixture of all three, "family night" is a terrific way to unite the clan.

One family sets aside Saturday night as pizza night. The whole family pitches in to make homemade pizza from scratch, with all their favorite toppings. Then they watch a video or go to a movie at the local dollar-a-movie

theater. Another family has weekly video nights where they only watch films that have won Academy Awards for best picture.

Monthly. Building a ritual around the phases of the moon may have a somewhat pagan ring to it, but celebrating the full moon can be an entertaining way to acknowledge the moon's cycles and may even spark an interest in astronomy or the other sciences in your children. One father takes a monthly walk with his children on the night of the full moon. They discuss the wildlife they see or make observations about the constellations, but they also talk about their dreams and memories.

A family book group is another way to bring the family together once a month. You may want to include the entire family, or have a mother-daughter book club and a father-son book group. A book group is a perfect forum for talking about many concepts, and kids can begin to feel confident expressing their opinions. Let each child choose the month's book (with some parental guidance).

Another educational yet fun monthly activity could be called "around the world in thirty days." At the beginning of the month, have a child close his or her eyes and point to a country on the map. Spend the rest of the month learning about that country, using encyclopedias, library books, and the Internet.

It's never too late to create new family traditions that can be passed on to future generations.



#### A Pinch of This, a Dash of That

If you've decided to create some new traditions for your family, here are some tips from family ritual expert Meg Cox.

- Rituals need to have structure—a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning is the preparation, the middle is the action, and the end is the moment of "integration and celebration." Creating a suitable environment for the ritual—through the lighting of candles, for example—is a necessary part of the first step.
- Two things give a ritual its power and meaning: 1) a focus of concentration that screens out everyday distractions, and 2) the calling up of a deep-seated "emotional or psychological truth" on the part of the participants. This truth that is celebrated may be a spiritual faith, a conviction of the importance of the family union, or a belief in a principle that conveys social or environmental benefit.
- You can create a tradition by organizing it around one of the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Planting a tree or some flowers can symbolize a new venture. A ritual using air connotes lightness and letting go (with balloons, kites, confetti, or soap bubbles). Fire can represent the sun, hearth and home, destruction that makes way for rebirth (e.g., candles, bonfires). Water means cleansing, baptism, and purification.
- Rituals often call for words. Use language that comes from the heart and expresses the event's emotional or psychological truth. And don't forget to include your sense of humor.
- Although it makes sense for a ritual to have a leader, that person should be willing to "share the microphone." Giving everyone a chance to say something contributes to the necessary give-and-take of a tradition.
- The end of the ritual is usually a time for celebration, and this often means food. The meal or refreshment you serve should be symbolic of the tradition you have shared together.

#### Some Things to Keep in Mind

When you're getting ready to create new traditions, focus on what's important to your family. If sports are a family passion, build some rituals around athletic events. If everyone loves to read, think about a family book group. If good food draws the clan together, consider taking cooking classes as a family. Do you feel strongly about doing charity work? Serve meals together in a soup kitchen or sing carols in nursing homes and hospitals.

Look at the calendar and see if there are times of the year that are lacking in ritual celebrations in your household. Perhaps you need to think about inventing rituals to commemorate the change of each season, or spend more time planning a really great family vacation each summer. Learn about your family's ethnic background and find ways to celebrate any ethnic holidays that apply. If your extended family doesn't already have a family reunion each year, think about starting one.

Remember that there are times when traditions need to change. Children will outgrow some rituals; a matriarch or patriarch who was a keeper of the ritual flame may die. A common occurrence in our society is divorce. After a remarriage, it's crucial that stepparents take the time to forge relationships with their new stepchildren, and making a tradition that you perform alone with the stepchild is an excellent way.

Folklorist Steve Zeitlin notes, "Rituals are an interesting combination of tradition and innovation—bringing the past to bear on the present—having the past be very present now. People can use tradition to change as well as to stay the same. Traditions need constant upkeep. It's never easy—a family needs to create its own world."

Keep in mind that spontaneity is an important element in any ritual, and rigid adherence to a tradition that has lost its luster and become hollow may alienate family members. Be flexible in your ritual practice. And remember that building rituals into your daily family routine can be good practice for the bigger traditions that come with holidays and special events.

Cultivate your traditions carefully, and they will nourish your family for years—perhaps even generations—to come. As Steve Zeitlin says, "Traditions are where you live, where you're born, and where you die. Tradition is where the meaning of our lives is found." &

Alyssa Hickman Grove is a Salt Lake City-based freelance writer and a former managing editor of Ancestry Magazine.

#### Further Reading

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Cox, Meg. The Heart of a Family: Searching America for New Traditions That Fulfill Us (Random House, 1998).

Gaither, Gloria, and Shirley Dobson. Let's Make a Memory: Great Ideas for Building Family Traditions and Togetherness (Word Books, 1983).

Zeitlin, Steven J., Amy J. Kotkin, and Holly Cutting Baker. A Celebration of American Family Folklore: Tales and Traditions from the Smithsonian Collection (Pantheon Books, 1982).

# TACKLING YOUR POUR BUILDING BU







If you're like most dedicated family historians, you've accumulated a great deal of information on your family. You've got stacks of photocopied documents on your desk; binders bulging with genealogical data; photo albums with portraits and snapshots of kids, grandparents, uncles and aunts; a treasured family Bible; even transcriptions of oral histories. You've learned the histories and cultures of your immigrant ancestors' homelands and have used that information to add detail to the sparse documents

#### BY JENNIFER BROWNING

you have on your more distant ancestors. In short, you've done research you're proud of, and you want others to have access to your findings.

The idea of publishing a family history has undoubtedly crossed your mind—perhaps even lingered there at times—but you might be overwhelmed with the prospect. Gathering and

#### TYPESETTING TIPS

It doesn't require a professional typesetter to make your book attractive. Remember the following pointers and you'll be well on your way to designing an attractive interior layout for your family history.

- I . Use only one font for the main text or body of the book. It should be a serif font with a bold and italic style (such as Garamond or Times).
- 2. Determine a font for chapter titles, photo captions, and subheads. You should use no more than three different fonts in the entire book.
- 3. When setting up the page layout, keep plenty of space (approximately one inch) on the top, bottom, and outside margins. You'll need an additional 1/8 inch or 1/4 inch on the inside to allow for binding.
- 4. White space is easy on the eye. Don't cram the text to save pages. Consider placing a photo, sidebar, genealogical record, highlighted quote, etc., every few pages to break up the text.
- 5. For highest print quality, make sure your photos are 300 dpi TIFFs. If you are scanning your photos, simply scan them at 100% and choose 300 dpi in the settings. Your photos shouldn't be scaled any larger than the original, this will maintain the image quality will be maintained at the press.

organizing your family data is one thing, but producing a quality publication you can be proud of is another. You've asked yourself: How much will a family history cost to produce? And how do I go about getting it printed? What about distributing it? Am I really up for the challenge?

The good news is that with the latest advances in digital book printing, getting your work printed is easier than ever

and can be done at minimal expense. With a little planning, you can leave the printing to the people who know the business, and focus your energy on your family history—the stuff you're already an expert at.

#### START WITH A PLAN

Even before you begin the task of writing, there are three things you'll need to decide—audience, scope, and length. Each of these elements will help you determine the amount of time, effort, and money you will need to devote to make your project a success.

1. Who is your audience? If you are writing for yourself and your immediate family, you will not need to print many copies and maybe a trip to your local copy shop will be sufficient. But if you are planning to distribute your finished product to the many members of your extended family, you'll need to choose a printer that can handle more volume. In other words, if your book is intended for the world to see, it should be written differently and produced differently than if it is intended for your personal use and the use of your immediate family.

When determining your audience, remember to be sensitive to the living members of your family. Your book may be read by many people and could be truly harmful to the private lives of your family. If your stories have the potential to hurt or humiliate (even if they are the truth), or encroach on privacy, it is best to leave the information out.

2. What is your scope? Will you include the descendants of your maternal grandparents or those of your great-greatgreat-grandfather, a famed Civil War hero? The greater the scope, the greater the potential audience—and the greater the amount of work.

It might be best to keep your first book project fairly small. Perhaps you could limit it to one set of your grand-parents and their children. Tell the stories of their life (if some members are still living, this is a great opportunity to interview them and include transcripts or passages from their oral histories). In the appendixes, you could include your family charts of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

3. What is the approximate length of your book? If you think your manuscript will become a 120-page softbound book with a few halftones (black and white photos) or a 400-page hardbound with pages of full-color family photos, your printing options will be vastly different. Determining the type and length of your book up front will give you more flexibility when deciding which print shop or press to use when it comes time to print.

Once you've determined your audience and the scope and size of your book, contact a few printers to get an idea of what you'll need to provide when the time comes, and how much it will cost. If you've already determined the specifics, you'll have a much easier time getting the information you need.

The printers you contact will need to know the approximate size, page count, and binding preference of your book to give you an accurate pricing. Also, ask your salesperson what file formats the press can use and what the specifications are; he or she will be able to provide you with a detailed list and information to get you on the right track from the beginning.

Your word processing software will be sufficient if you are sending your manuscript to the local copy shop, such as Kinkos, for printing and binding. If you're printing your family history at a press, you may be planning to work in Word or WordPerfect, or maybe you've got a professional desktop publishing software program on your PC, such as QuarkXPress, Adobe InDesign, or Pagemaker. Regardless of the application you use, make sure the printer you've selected can handle the file format you create. Since .pdf files can be created from most word processing applications, you may want to ask about submitting your book as a .pdf file. Many presses accept .pdf files that are made to their specifications.

Consider these things before you get too far into the writing portion of your project. All of these issues will impact your project, and it will be helpful to you if you go into it knowing exactly what you need to do.

#### **DELVE INTO WRITING**

Once you've handled the preliminary details of printing and have a good idea of what the project entails, you're ready to move forward with the book and get it written and formatted.

Undoubtedly, you already have many ideas on getting started and perhaps you've already written some or most of your book. Many genealogy software programs have options for exporting your information into basic story format. This may be the best option to get you going if you haven't begun and need a good jump-start. Then it's

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#### CHOOSING A COVER DESIGN

The cover of your book can be as simple or as detailed as you want. If you don't feel comfortable designing a cover, many print houses, especially those specializing in printing family histories, offer design services for a fee.

Before you ask for a bid from a printer, you'll need to decide the page-count and size, and whether you want a one-color or four-color cover. If you decide to print a hardcover book, you'll also need to choose a color of leather or cloth and have a foil stamp designed.

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just a matter of filling in the human-interest stories of your family history to complete the bulk of the book. Of course, every published family history should include source documentation. Your genealogy software program will likely have an option for exporting this information as well.

Consider also including the interviews of relatives you've transcribed, timelines of the key players in your family history (including both life events and historical events to show context), as well as some of the favorite family photos in your collection. These additions will be valuable to the family history you are compiling and are likely already a part of your family data so they won't take much more work to include.

When you feel like you've got a good manuscript, hand it over to a friend or family member to review, offer comments, and perhaps even proofread for grammatical errors. Unless you feel like your writing really needs a professional editor and you can afford it, you probably don't need one. Just be open-minded to the suggestions and opinions your reviewer gives you. At this point, you will undoubtedly have read through your manuscript several times and will need a fresh set of eyes to see some of its major problems.

Once your manuscript has been reviewed and you've made any changes, it is time to begin the layout process.

When formatting or typesetting your manuscript, determine an easy and logical hierarchy for chapters, heads, and subheads. If done correctly, your readers will be able to grasp the organization of your book intuitively. Keep it simple. Be sure to include, as needed, a table of contents, index, appendixes, a list of illustrations, footnotes or endnotes, etc. You may want to consult the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003) for a detailed guide to putting your book together.

#### GET IT PRINTED

If you've decided to print and bind your book at the local copy shop, you'll only need to print one final copy of your book at home. The copy shop can copy it multiple times and bind it there.

For a short print run with a professional cover and binding, save your completed manuscript as a .pdf or other acceptable file format, burn it onto a CD-ROM, and take it to a local digital printer that offers "print on demand" (POD). The concept of POD is to print small quantities of a book so there is no need to keep a warehouse or basement full of books. The digital printing process eliminates the need to go to a traditional printing press, which is very expensive for small print runs. And compared to a local

#### QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINTER

Your experience with printing representatives will be better if you have a few educated questions prepared when you contact them. (Always consult several print houses.) Requesting an estimate for a family history without any particulars will frustrate both you and the printer.

- What paper would you recommend? Most presses have a house paper that is good quality and usually less expensive. Be sure you ask about it. Also, when meeting with a printer, bring some books from home that have paper and cover stock similar to what you'd like for your own book.
- 2. Can I get a paper sample?
- 3. What types of files can you handle? Camera-ready (a high-quality printout from your home computer) or digital?

- 4. What are your terms? Most presses require at least partial payment in advance.
- 5. What is your turnaround time? Remember that it can take three to four weeks for traditional offset printing of a softbound book, and six to eight weeks for a hardbound. If you have a deadline to meet, be sure you plan for the extra weeks for production.
- Can I get an estimate and a quote? A quote is an actual commitment to print your book at the stated price.
- 7. What are your fees for corrections and changes once the files have been submitted?
- 8. Will I receive proofs of the book (including any corrections I make after the files are initially submitted) before it is printed?
- 9. How do I submit cover materials?
- 10. Do you offer design services for covers?

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copy shop, POD gives you much greater quality, print, and cover options. Unfortunately, when comparing POD to a traditional press, some of the quality, especially with photos, is lost. You'll need to weigh the costs against the benefits to determine if this is the best way to print your book.

If you've decided to go with a traditional press, you'll find that a range in quantity (e.g., 500, 2,000, and 5,000) will help you determine the best price break. For example, if you print 5,000 books, the cost per book will be much lower than if you print 500. And if you're willing to look at the price break between 150 pages and 400 pages, as well as hardbound versus softbound, your price will vary significantly as well.

For presses that are devoted specifically to family histories, you'll want to explore the offerings of Mechling Bookbindery at <www.mechlingbooks.com>, Gateway Press, Inc. at <www.gatewaypress.com>, Trafford at <www.trafford.com>, and Anundsen Publishing Company at <www.anundsenpubl.com>, among others. You'll find that each of these companies offers a variety of printing and distribution services designed specifically for the needs of family historians.

#### WHAT ABOUT DISTRIBUTION?

If you've decided that printing your book is not a viable option, for whatever reason, you may want to consider distributing your book digitally. This could mean posting it to a family website, creating a .pdf file and distributing it via e-mail, or burning it onto a CD-ROM along with your GEDCOM file. You'll find that the digital age is taking publishing to many different places, one of which could be just the solution for your family history project.

If you are seeking broad distribution of your book as well as marketing and have more money available for the project, look into online resources such as I-Universe at <www.iuniverse.com> and Exlibris at <www.lexlibris.com>. Both companies offer reasonably priced printing and marketing packages that could be just what you need.

Once you've got your completed book in hand, consider donating a copy of it to your local genealogical or historical society, your local library, and the LDS Family History Library. Check with each archive individually to learn the best method of donation. According to FamilySearch.org, donations to the Family History Library will be accepted

as long as they are useful to researchers (they must be readable and help researchers find names, dates, and places), add new information to the library's collection, and don't violate current privacy and copyright laws.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when you begin the task of writing and printing your family history is to take your time. If you have a family reunion you want to take your book to, take a copy of the manuscript instead for comments, corrections, and pre-orders. You'll be glad you didn't rush the project and compromise its quality. Your family history is just too important. §

Jennifer Browning is the senior editor of Ancestry Magazine. She has been involved in the editing, typesetting, and production process of the books and magazines at Ancestry Publishing for several years.

Note: For recent *Ancestry* articles related to this topic, visit <www.ancestry.com/library/view/ancmag/7880.asp>.

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#### SUGGESTED READING

How to Get Your E-Book Published: An Insider's Guide to the World of Electronic Publishing. Richard Curtis and William Thomas Quick, (Writer's Digest Books, 2002).

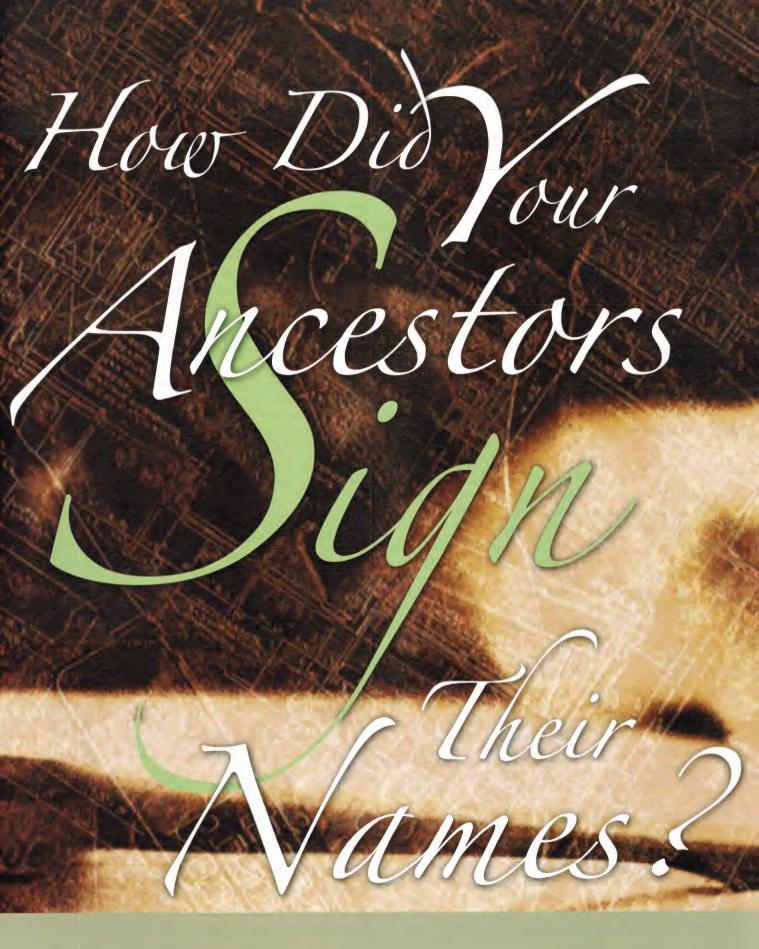
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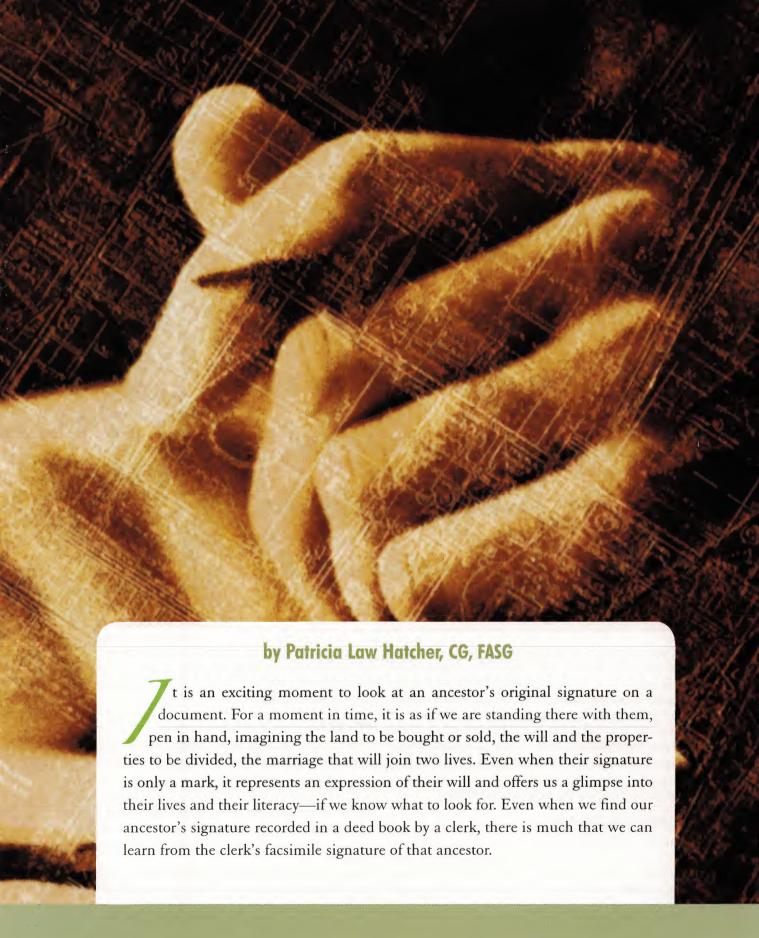
Successful Self-Publishing from Manuscript to Market. Ann Lloyd, (Know More, 2002).

So You Want to Self-Publish: How to Avoid the Pitfalls, Experience the Joys, and Make Money at Self-Publishing. Steve Meyer (Meyer, 1997).

The Self-Publishing Manual: How to Write, Print, and Sell Your Own Book, 13th ed., rev. Dan Poynter (Para, 2002).

The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing. Tom and Marylin Ross (Writer's Digest Books, 2002).





#### SIGNATURES IN UNUSUAL PLACES

Two of the best possibilities for finding original signatures are probate packets and marriage bonds or permissions. In your search to find an ancestor's signature or mark, it sometimes helps to look beyond records indexed under your ancestor's name. For instance, your ancestor may not have written a will, but he may have been a witness, provided bond, taken an inventory, or presented an accounting for friends, relatives, neighbors, and associates on several occasions, leaving original signatures in their probate files.

the original document, creating what I will refer to as *fac-simile signatures*. While not original, they can be immensely helpful in understanding your ancestor's literacy and in providing genealogical evidence.

Clerks were more likely to create facsimiles of signatures if they were unusual or awkward. Those of us with ancestors who were illiterate, semiliterate, and who rarely picked up a pen—or those who were creative in their signature—are most likely to find facsimiles.

Persons with legible, script handwriting probably had their signatures recorded in the clerk's own hand. However,

most clerks were careful to preserve the form of the name, noting, for example, if the original was William, Wm, or Willm. Make careful note of the form of any signature you find.

Your ancestor may not have written a will, but if he was a witness for a neighbor, he may have left his original signature in his neighbor's files.

#### **PROFICIENCY**

Your ancestor's signature may give you insight into his or her level of education. We can tell, for example, that Verlinda (Graves) Stone achieved only the most rudimentary of printing skills. In fact, the Maryland clerk's attempt to record her printed signature from her will indicates that she no longer remembered the letters required

for Verlinda. It seems the clerk either added "Stone" himself, or else that particular portion of her printed signature was accurate enough that he felt confident in printing the letters in his own hand.<sup>1</sup>

If your ancestor was wealthy enough to be the loaner rather than the borrower, you may find an original signature in a deed book. When a mortgage was paid off, sometimes the release was written in the margin of the book and signed by the person who had loaned the money.

Only the seller of land signed a deed if it was a simple land transfer. A deed may be the best opportunity you have to find signatures from your female ancestors since women infrequently wrote wills. In many cases a wife's dower rights dictated that she also be a party to the deed.

#### **FACSIMILE SIGNATURES**

Original signatures, however, are not always available to us. The signatures on documents transcribed into will and deed books were not written by your ancestor, but many clerks carefully reproduced the marks and signatures from

#### ETHNICITY

Think for a moment of the problem facing the county clerk recording a deed or will in which the maker was a German immigrant. What happened when the clerk came to the signature? He couldn't read the German gothic letter forms, so he couldn't write the English cursive equivalents. Early Scandinavian immigrants also wrote in a gothic text, creating a similar problem. The solution? A facsimile signature.

It is not always apparent merely from an ancestor's name whether he or she was English or German. A gothic

signature, even a facsimile, answers that question. Immigrants may learn to speak a new language, perhaps even read and write it, but rarely do they change their signatures. If the children of immigrants were educated at home or in a school within the ethnic community, they, too, wrote in gothic script. Later generations, although they had the same Germanic or Scandinavian names, were more likely to have been trained to write in cursive. Thus, a signature offers insight into how recently a family came to America.

#### A VARIETY OF MARKS

Not all individuals who signed with a mark used an X or +. It is interesting to observe the variety of ways in which persons attempted to make their marks both personal and unique. Some people managed only a simple squiggle or circle, but many used an initial letter of their first or last name, indicating that they had probably learned their alphabet as children.

Many clerks followed the practice of carefully recording individual marks. Unfortunately, this thoughtful practice was not universal. Some county clerks simply wrote "his mark" or "her X mark," even though the mark may not have been an X. Some published abstracts do not include descriptions of the marks.

If your ancestor signed with a mark, you will want to obtain copies of every document. The differences between how two individuals wrote a simple letter of the alphabet can be significant.

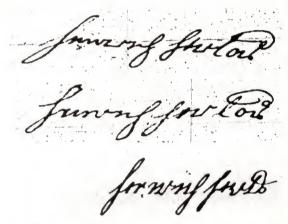
When William Smith made his will in Cecil County, Maryland, in 1709, he signed with his W mark—as did the William Smith who witnessed it. The differences between the two are so distinctive that if we found another document recorded by an equally meticulous clerk, we probably would be able to assign the document with some surety to the correct man. They also indicate the value of keeping photocopies or scanned images of every ancestral signature or mark, whether original or facsimile.

#### SIGNATURES AS EVIDENCE

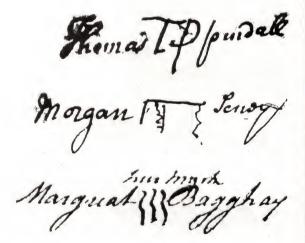
Signatures and marks (whether facsimile or original) can be immensely helpful in cementing a case because they visually indicate that two documents almost surely belong to the same person, or that they probably belong to different persons. We must make the distinction in the latter instance because although similarities



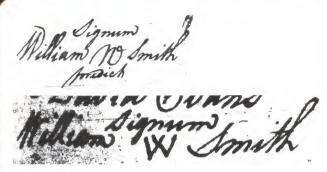
**Verlinda Stone** The facsimile signature on Verlinda Stone's 1675 will shows that her literacy level went only as far as printing, assuming that the clerk added the Stone in her signature.



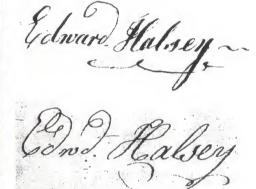
**Henry Harless** The attempts by this Virginia county clerk to record the German signature of Henry Harless were, quite frankly, not very accurate facsimiles. They are sufficient, however, to show that Henry, who was born in Virginia, was probably educated at home by his immigrant parents. Although these deeds refer to him as Henry, his signature is Henrich.



Many people chose marks that incorporated their initials, as seen on Thomas Pindall's will. The mark with which Morgan Seney signed his will shows a very shaky M, possibly indicating his physical weakness. Margaret Bagghay used three vertical squiggles when she witnessed Verlinda Stone's will, possibly her version of the initial for her first name. Notice how carefully the clerk seems to have rendered each individual's mark.



**William Smith** The cursive W mark of William Smith the testator and the printed W mark of William Smith the witness show how facsimile marks might help us separate men of the same name who used the same mark.



**Edward Halsey** Compare the lowercase letters to see the similarities in these original signatures of Edward Halsey, made thirteen years apart in two different states. Notice especially the flourish under the name.



**Henrich and Dietrich Weitzel** The signatures on the 1751 oath, 1771 deed facsimilo, and 1776 will for Honrich are a good match. For Dietrich, however, we must conclude that the 1751 mark and the 1765 will belonged to two different men.

between two signatures or marks are probably not coincidental, dissimilarities may be a function of the recorder.

Similar signatures or marks, used with other records, can tell us that two documents were signed by the same person, allowing us to make connections over time, place, and marriage. Let's look at some examples.

Edward Halsey. The value of searching for your ancestor as a witness is shown by comparing the original signature when Edward Halsey witnessed a 1772 receipt in Otsego County, New York, to the original signature when he witnessed a 1785 will in Gloucester County, New Jersey.<sup>2</sup>

Although one signature is for Edward and one is for Edwd, other evidence is consistent with these being the same man. Pay careful attention to the lowercase letters, which often are the best indicator in determining a match.

Henrich and Dietrich Weitzel. The signatures to the oaths of affirmation made by German immigrants arriving in colonial Philadelphia can be valuable evidence in linking the ship of passage to a man who resided in interior Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup>

Henrich Weitzel left an original will in Lebanon Township of Lancaster County. There is also a facsimile signature in a deed book there. In 1751, Johan Henrich Weitzel arrived on the *Patience* and signed the oath. Is this the same man?

Dietrich Weitzel also left an original will in Lebanon Township. The name "Johan Diterich Weitsen" appears immediately above that of Henrich on the list. Could Weitsen be an error for Weitzel?

Examinations of the signatures provides the answers for both. Henrich's signatures bear striking similarities.<sup>4</sup> Dietrich is just the opposite. He signed his will with a shaky signature, perhaps reflecting, as his will says, that "the mortality of my body draws nearer every minute. God grant me a happy death." The man on the *Patience* signed with a mark, indicating the passenger was not the man in Lebanon Township.

Francis Walker. Chronology was a key factor in showing that the descendents of Frances Walker of Staten Island and Woodbridge, New Jersey, were not descendents of the Frances Walker who married Elizabeth Soule, daughter of *Mayflower* passenger George Soule.<sup>5</sup>

Facsimile marks from deeds when Frances Walker of Woodbridge sold land in 1686 and 1706 were a key piece of evidence in demonstrating that the documents belonged to one man. Unfortunately

for hopeful Mayflower descendants, this showed that he could not be Frances, husband of Elizabeth Soule, because that Frances Walker died about 1701.

Sarah (Bolles) Chadbourne Nason. The appearance of a signature or mark may suggest the identity of a wife when little specific information is available.

In 1690/1, Sarah (Bolles) Chadbourne [wife of Humphrey] witnessed a will with her S mark. She was widowed in 1694, but remarried to an unidentified husband by 1707.

Martha, wife of Benjamin Nason, a neighbor of the Chadbournes, had died by 1705/6 when Benjamin and his wife Sarah sold land. Sarah's similar S mark indicates that these widowed neighbors had married each other.<sup>6</sup>

What's in a name? Or even in a few letters or pen scratches on a page? A lifetime of hard work, of choices, of sacrifices. If you know what to look for, you may find much more than a name in the records your ancestors left behind. &

Patricia Law Hatcher, CG, FASG, is the author of Producing a Quality Family History and Locating Your Roots—Discover Your Ancestors Using Land Records and a frequent columnist for the Ancestry Daily News.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. John Frederick Dorman. Adventurers of Purse and Person, Virginia 1607–1624/5 (n.p.: Order of the First Families of Virginia, 1987), 329.
- 2. Patricia Law Hatcher. "The Halseys of Meigs County, Ohio; Otsego County, New York; and New Jersey," New York Genealogical and Biographical Record 133(2002): 243–57.
- 3. The signatures are reproduced in volume 2 of Ralph Beaver Strassburger and William John Hinke, Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727–1803 (Birdsboro, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1934; Picton Press reprint, 1992).
- 4. Patricia Law Hatcher. "Using Your Ancestors' Markers," *Ancestry Daily News*, 3 July 2003.
- 5. Robert Charles Anderson. "Elizabeth Soule, Wife of Francis Walker, and their Posterity," *Mayflower Quarterly* 50 (February 1984): 31–40. Patricia Law Hatcher, "Richmond County Deeds 'Liber A'—A Mystery Solved," *NYGBS Newsletter* 10 (Winter 1999): 7–8.
- 6. Joseph Crook Anderson II. "Mary<sup>3</sup> Nason, wife of William Chadbourne of Berwick, Maine," *The American Genealogist* 73 (April 1993): 106–12.

the marks of francis walks

the marks of the francis walks

ween of ingrone or urunog

maniel Walter he Marks

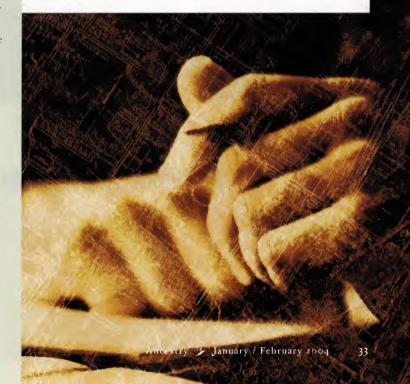
**Frances Walker** These simple 0 facsimile marks link documents from 1686 (two signatures) and 1706, showing that they were almost surely made by the same man.

Sarah S (Tradeurn)

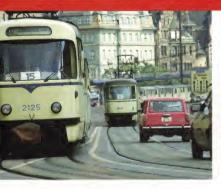
Benjannin / Jafon (Aux)

Farah S / Lafon

**Sarah (Bolles) Chadbourne** The similarity of these facsimile marks suggest that Sarah (Bolles) Chadbourne became Sarah (Bolles) Chadbourne Nason.



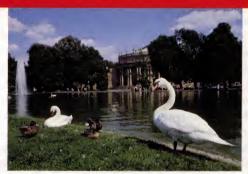
# Beginning





by Adele Maurine Marcum







any Americans trace their roots back to Germany but face the challenge of finding an ancestor's place of origin. Even when a town has been located, German records can be intimidating because of insufficient knowledge of record types, handwriting styles, jurisdictions, and language barriers. So where should you begin your German research? Begin first by reading a brief history of Germany and by studying maps to get a perspective on boundary changes over time. You'll find that you can get much German research done in the United States before you have to move across the ocean.



#### Start With U.S. Records

Because there was no central repository for German records and most records were kept on a local level, locating a precise ancestral town is critical for German research. U.S. records can provide the bridge back to Germany. While no one record will contain the entire answer, by assembling the clues found in a myriad of records you can determine your ancestor's place of origin. Census, vital records, church records, newspapers, naturalization records, and compiled genealogies are just a few of the resources available.

U.S. Federal Census. Numerous clues can be found from the federal population schedules about an ancestor's place of origin—especially from the post-1850 census records that collected the name, age, occupation, and birthplace of each person. Beginning in 1880, census takers gathered birthplace information for a person's parents as well. The 1900 census initialized the collection of citizenship data, including the year the individual immigrated to the United States, the number of years in the country, and the citizenship status (whether naturalized or alien).

Vital Records. Another excellent source for discovering a place of origin is vital records, which recorded major life events. Marriage and death records for an ancestor and other family members (including siblings who may have accompanied an ancestor across the ocean) may list birthplace information. Birth records for children of an ancestor born in the United States may contain similar information. Many indexes are available to help in the search for these records.

Church Records. Parish records chronicled similar life events to those found in vital records (birth, marriage, and death). However, events recorded in parish registers often supply more detail than their government-issued cousins. Priests were usually well-acquainted with the parishioners and included details about the individual within the record or as notes in the margin. Often these personal notes contained information regarding the individual's place of origin. Church records can be among the most helpful in locating an immigrant ancestor's place of origin.

Newspapers. Historical newspapers from an ancestor's

#### Time Line of German History

1243

Hapsburg dynasty begins

1356 The Golden Bull.

an ecclesiastical document, set forth the rules for election of the king 1437-1806 Holy Roman Empire

of the German Nation

Protestant Reformation begins

1524

Protestant begin in Nürnberg

1534

Standardized German Most Catholic church records language begins with the publication of Luther's translation of the Old Testament

countries of Europe adopt the Gregorian Calendar

1600

Surnames in common use throughout German areas

residence in the United States are a source not to be overlooked. In addition to providing the context of life in that locality, newspapers may also hold precious clues to a German place of origin. Obituaries, birth and marriage announcements, and news articles are among the multitude of sources to check in the newspaper. You'll also want to check the ethnic newspapers published in the United States.

Emigration/Immigration Records. United States passenger lists, naturalization records, and other emigration/immigration records should not be overlooked when determining an ancestor's home in Germany. Passenger lists for U.S. ports of arrival usually enumerated each passenger with information on his or her place of origin and destination in America. Naturalization records (especially those filed after 1906) contained important genealogical information, including a renouncing of citizenship from a specific locality in Germany. Naturalization indexes are available in book form as well as online.

Compiled Genealogies. In searching for an ancestor's place of origin, do not overlook compiled genealogies. The most common type are published by individual families, copies of which may be located in the Library of Congress, Family History Library, Newberry Library in Chicago, or other large libraries. Additionally, researchers should search the area where the ancestor settled for local histories. The ancestor may be mentioned in the biographical sketches included in the town or county's history.

## **Determine Jurisdictions**

Once adequate evidence points to a particular locality in Germany, consult a German gazetteer such as Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des deutschen Reichs. Originally published in Leipzig in 1912 and reproduced in 2000 by Raymond S. Wright III (Baltimore: Genealogical Publications), Meyers includes localities found in the German Empire of 1871. Entries will provide a plethora of information, from the churches in the town to where the district and government records for that town are located.

However, there are some intimidating aspects of Meyers for those new to German research. Entries are full of abbreviations and are written in German as well as the unfamiliar Gothic print. Luckily, there are many help guides available to assist

## Internet Resources

Germany GenWeb Page www.rootsweb.com/~wggerman

Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies http://feefhs.org

German Genealogy Home Page www.genealogienetz.de/genealogy.html

Germanic Genealogy Society www.rootsweb.com/~mnggs/GGS.html

Palatines to America http://genealogy.org/~palam/

American Historical Society of Germans to Russia www.ahsgr.org

German-Bohemian Heritage Society www.rootsweb.com/~gbhs/

German Russian Genealogical Library http://pixel.cs.vt.edu/library/odessa.html

Black Forest Genealogy www.websters.net/blackforest/

Genealogy.net www.genealogienetz.de/genealogy.html

Ellis Island www.ellisisland.org

Family History Library Catalog www.familysearch.org

ShtetlSeeker from JewishGen www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSeeker

Lutheran Church in Germany www.ekd.de

Catholic Church in Germany www.kath.de

MapQuest (Germany) www.mapquest.de

1618-1648

30 Years War (many records destroyed)

1683

Germantown. Pennsylvania, becomes the first permanent German settlement in the United States

1700

Gregorian calendar universal in Germany

**First** large-scale immigration to American colonies by Swiss and Palatines

Port of Catherine the Philadelphia Great invites instigates civil records Germans begin to settle in Russia

1763

1792 France registration west of the

Rhein River

Napoleon annexes the Rhein and consolidates German principalities

1803-15

English	German					
Aunt	Tante					
Birth	Geburt, Geburtsregister, Geborene, geboren					
Burial	Beerdingungen, begraben, Begräbnisse, bestattet, beerdigt					
Catholic	katholisch					
Child	Kind, Kinder					
Christening	Taufe, Taufen, Getaufte					
Confirmations	Konfirmationen, Firmungen					
Civil registry	Standesamt					
Death	Tote, Tod, sterben, starb, verstorben, gestro- ben, Sterbefall					
Father	Vater					
Husband	Mann, Ehemann, Gatte					
Index	Verzeichnis, Register					
Jewish	Jüdisch, Jude(n), israelitisch					
Marriage banns	Proklamationen, Aufgebote, Verkündigungen					
Marriage	Heiraten, Trauungen, Getraute, Ehe, Kopula- tion, kopulieren, verheiratet, Verehelichungen, Eheschliessungen					
Month	Monat					
Mother	Mutter					
Name, given	Vorname, Name					
Name, surname	Zuname, Familiename, Geschlechtsname, Name					
Parents	Eltern					
Parish	Pfarrei, Kirchspiel, Gemeinde					
Protestant	Evangelisch, lutherisch, Protestant					
Reformed	Reformiert					
Uncle	Onkel					
Wife	Frau, Ehegattin, Weib, Ehefrau, Hausfrau, Gattin					
Year Jahr						

researchers in deciphering the entries. It is important to remember—especially when first using Meyers—to pick out the key words and phrases and not attempt to translate the entire entry. Consider this example for the town of Vynen:

Vynen, D., des Rheins, Pr. Rheinl., RB Düsseldorf, Kreis Mörs, AG Xanten, Bkdo Geldern, StA. Brgm. P E 3,2 Marienbaum...

The "D" indicates that Vynen is a Dorf, or town, on the Rhine River, part of Prussian Rhineland (des Rheins, Pr. Rehinl). The Regierungsbezirk (RB) or principle administrative office (like a district) is located in Düsseldorf. This is where most of the records would eventually be deposited. Vynen is part of the County or Kreis Mörs, which means emigration records could be found in Mörs. Court records (AG) for Vynen can be found in Xanten and military records (Bkdo) in Geldern. Civil registration and Bürgermeister rolls (StA. Brgm.) would be found in Marienbaum.

## **Proceed with Caution**

Knowing the jurisdiction with which the ancestral town is associated will help you overcome one big hurdle to German research. Handwriting and language can be obstacles as well. There are several important things to remember when transcribing a document:

- 1. Have an idea of what the letters should look like.
- 2. Identify the nuances of the scribe's handwriting.
- 3. Use dictionaries and other helps to translate words from German to English.

Because of varying styles of handwriting, it is helpful to create a chart to help identify how different scribes formed each letter. Take a separate sheet of paper, and write the uppercase alphabet down the length of the paper. Do the same for the lowercase letters. Search the documents for examples of the way this particular scribe writes each letter. This will need to be done for each new record. When

1817

Lutheran and Reformed churches required to merge with Evangelical Church in Prussia

1843-59

First main wave of German immigration to the United States during nineteenth century

1849

When German revolution of 1848 fails, a large group of political refugees flee to the U.S.

1850

The Hamburg Passenger Lists documents passengers places of origin

1865-74 Second large

wave of immigration to the United **States** 

<del>1871-1918</del> Unification of Germany

Prussia implements civil registration (required in all areas of Germany by 1876)

1874

you are familiar with each scribe's handwriting, you won't be thrown off by the extra strokes at the end of a letter or the missing dots over "i" or "j". Keep a copy of the "typical" alphabet for reference.

After transcribing the record, proceed with the translation. While knowing German is certainly helpful to research, it is by no means required. In the beginning, it is enough to glean the most important information from the documents. You can return later for greater details after you have improved your language skills. Start by identifying key words and phrases in German to help comprehend what the record is about. What kind of record is it? Then look for the date and the ancestor's name. Keep in mind spelling variations. Continue translating the remainder of the document.

There are thousands of other words or phrases that may be included in the German record. Use a regular German dictionary like the Langenscheidt German Pocket Dictionary that has German-English and English-German translations. Another German dictionary that will come in handy is Ernest Thode's German-English Genealogical Dictionary. Because it focuses on genealogy vocabulary, almost any word you find in the German genealogy records—especially during the beginning translation stages—will be included in Thode's.

## Delve into German Records

With the data assembled from *Meyers* and a familiarity with handwriting and language, you will be more comfortable looking for and translating German records. Many of the principal record types can be found on microfilm at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Others can be located at city, state, and regional archives in Germany.

## Parish Records

Parish records are the primary source used by researchers, especially for those just beginning the research process. And it is no wonder since these records are generally more easily accessible and contain a wealth of information. Nevertheless, the quality, quantity, arrangement, and recording of information varied according to religious practices and

from priest to priest. Catholic registers were usually written in Latin (by mandate of the Council of Trent in 1563) until the early nineteenth century. Protestant registers since the Reformation were written in German. Both were usually recorded in the Fraktur handwriting. Early records can be found in paragraph form, a style that continued for many years, especially in Catholic parishes.

To obtain a copy of a parish register, check the Family History Library Catalog at <www.familysearch.org> for the specific locality. Large cities had many churches, and each served a different part of the city. Rural churches served many different towns and hamlets. If the parish cannot be located in an ancestor's town, check the towns close to it. If there are several possible parishes in the ancestral city—and the search cannot be narrowed down any further—the best thing to do is start with one parish and move to the next until all of them have been searched.

## **Civil Registration**

Civil registration records include birth, marriage, and death records and were kept by the local government. The practice of registering these life events with the government did not gain widespread acceptance until the last part of the nineteenth century. Originally, the parish was the primary source for recording life events; however, Napoleon influenced the keeping of civil registration in Germany when his armies occupied portions of the country. Before 1876, areas occupied by France were primarily the only provinces to mandate civil registration. These areas included most of the land west of the Rhine. Thus, civil registration can be found as early as 1798 in these areas. Prussia mandated civil registration for its provinces starting 1 October 1874, with the entire German Empire following suit beginning 1 January 1876.

## Passenger Lists

The most popular ports of departure in Germany were Bremen and Hamburg, although many Germans left through other European ports such as Antwerp, Le Havre, and Liverpool. For each departure, the passenger list gener-

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	O	0	U	-7	J	dor	17	14	-	ı	O	

Third wave of German immigration to the United States World War I

Treaty of Versailles. Germany loses land 919-33

Weimar Hitler
Republic chancellor of
Germany

World War II

1949

Federal Republic of West Germany and the German Democratic Republic of East Germany created 1990

German reunification



## Suggested Reading

Hans Bahlow with Edda Gentry, trans. *Dictionary of German Names*. Madison, Wis: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2002.

Edward R. Brandt, Mary Bellingham, et al, eds. *Germanic Genealogy: A Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns*. St. Paul, Minn: Germanic Genealogy Society, 1995.

Family History Library. *Research Outline: Germany*. Salt Lake City: Family History Library, 2000.

Larry O. Jensen. A Genealogical Handbook of German Research. Pleasant Grove, Utah: Jensen Publications, 1980.Shirley J. Riemer. The German Research Companion. Sacra-

mento, Calif: Lorelei, 1997.

Kenneth L. Smith. *Genealogical Dates: A User-Friendly Guide*. Camden, Maine: Picton, 1994.

—. German Church Books: Beyond the Basics. Camden, Maine: Picton, 1993.

Ernest Thode. German-English Genealogical Dictionary. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1992.

Wendy K. Uncapher. *Lands of the German Empire and Before*. Janesville, Wis.: Origins, 2000.

ally included the name of the ship, the captain's name, the port and date of each ship's departure, and the port and date of its arrival in America. Beneath all of this, a roster of all the passengers aboard was given. The specific biographical information varied from list to list, but most included more personal information than simply a person's name.

Unfortunately, many passenger lists from Bremen and other ports did not survive. City archivists in Bremen destroyed some lists between 1875 and 1909 due to lack of storage space. Other lists were destroyed from Allied bombing during World War II. Portions of the Bremen passenger lists that survived are found in List of Passengers Bound from Bremen to New York, 1847-67, a four-volume work by Gary Zimmerman and Marion Wolfert (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1985-88). Many Germans from Russia, Poles, and others from the Slavic group selected Bremen as their port of departure. A new series by Ira Glazier, Germans from Russia: Migration from the Russian Empire: Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995) focuses on the Germans from Russia.

A popular compilation of passenger lists is Ira A. Glazier and P. William Filby's Germans to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving in U.S. Ports (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1988). Arranged in volumes according to arrival date in America from January 1850 to June 1897, you can search the index in the back of the pertinent volume (or volumes). Entries generally list the name of the ship, the date of arrival in America, the port name, the name of passenger, age, and departure information. However, a word of caution before using these lists: when names were extracted from the original passenger lists, many persons were missed. Use these lists cautiously.

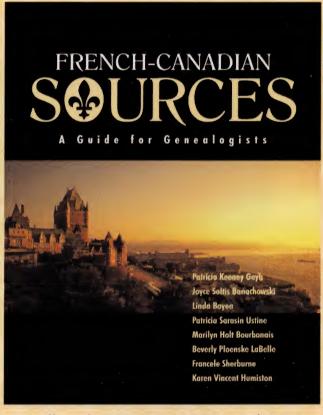
German research is not as daunting when taken piece by piece. Begin with U.S. records to discover clues about an ancestor's place of origin. Use a German gazetteer to determine the jurisdictions to which a particular locality belongs (where records would be kept). Become familiar with the handwriting and language used in genealogical documents. Then you can start searching German records for information about your ancestors.

Adele Maurine Marcum graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in family history, specializing in German/Slavic research. In addition to her responsibilities as a content acquisitions researcher for Ancestry.com, she teaches beginning and intermediate German research classes online for MyFamily.com, Inc.

# FRENCH-CANADIAN SOURCES

A Guide for Genealogists

any thousands of the descendants of the intrepid French men and women who came to North America in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries have found that French-Canadian genealogy is a fruitful and engrossing avocation. French-Canadian Sources provides detailed explanations about the major primary and secondary sources available to those seeking French Canadian ancestors. This book is a six-year collaborative effort of the eight members of the French Canadian/Acadian Genealogical Society of Wisconsin's Publication Committee, who worked together to compile, revise, and update articles relating to research and sources that had been published in the association's quarterly publication over a period of some fifteen years.



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To avoid unnecessary errors in your family history, make your conclusions only on the basis of accurate information.





n searching for valid documentation, even experienced family historians risk making conclusions, based on certain irrefutable facts, that appear to be true but are not. Expressed in mathematical terms, these erroneous solutions occur because at least one relevant factor has been omitted from the equation. In order to illustrate this point, three case studies will be examined and discussed here.

Each of these cases begins with authentic facts based on research conducted with meticulous care in thoroughly reliable sources. In each case, the collection of correct facts is followed by a logical conclusion. However, each example concludes with new information that provides undisputable evidence that the original assumption, as logical as it may have seemed, was wrong.

The first two of these cases illustrate the havoc two fathers caused by flouting convention in naming children. The third case illustrates how ignorance of customs by which surnames may be chosen leads to a patently false, but seemingly logical assumption.

## **Case One:**Mayflower Descendancy

When my research proved that I am descended from John, the son of Humphrey and Lydia [Garner] Turner, I was thrilled to discover (mistakenly as it turned out) that William Brewster of the *Mayflower* was one of my direct ancestors.

**The Facts:** In November of 1645, John Turner, son of Humphrey and Lydia Turner of Scituate, Massachusetts, married Mary Brewster, granddaughter of Pilgrim William Brewster. Mary Turner was the mother of all thirteen of John Turner's children. Thus, John Turner's descendants are also *Mayflower* descendants through his wife Mary [Brewster] Turner.

**Reasonable Assumption:** I am eligible to join the Mayflower Society based on documentary proof that I am a direct descendant of John Turner, the husband of Mary Brewster who was the mother of all of his children, and the granddaughter of prominent Pilgrim, William Brewster.

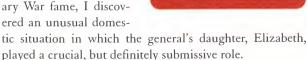
Not so: There was only one problem with my assumption. Humphrey and Lydia Turner had two sons named John, each of whom lived to adulthood. Family historians who have conducted seventeenth and eighteenth century genealogical research know that often when a child died, a sibling of the same gender born at a later date was given the name of the deceased child. However, both of Humphrey and Lydia Turner's sons named John lived to an old age. They were known as John the Elder, or Senior, and John the Younger, or Junior, and both were the fathers of numerous sons and daughters. Four years after the elder John married Mary Brewster, the younger John married Ann James.

Once I discovered that there were two brothers named John Turner, my continued research revealed that I am descended from John the Younger, and his wife Ann was not a *Mayflower* descendant. Thus, I was mistaken in my initial belief that I could join the Mayflower Society on the basis of proof of descent from William Brewster.

In his History of Scituate, Massachusetts, Samuel Deane speculates that Humphrey Turner named a second son John at the request of the child's godfather, who may have been a man of some means with no children, and thus might remember his godson generously in his will.

## **Case Two:** Thomas Jeffie

In researching the family of New Hampshire's General John Stark of Revolutionary War fame, I discovered an unusual domes-



**The Facts:** John Cameron and Elizabeth Stark were married in Ryegate, Vermont, in 1795. By the time they had been married ten years, John and Elizabeth had four living children born to them in this order: Archibald, John, Elizabeth, and Thomas Jefferson.

**Reasonable Assumption:** In 1805, the family of Judge John Cameron and his wife Elizabeth consisted of themselves, plus three sons: Archibald, John, and Thomas Jefferson; and one daughter, Elizabeth.

**Not so:** Being an ardent admirer of Thomas Jefferson, John Cameron was determined that the next baby born to the family be named Thomas Jefferson Cameron. Unfortunately, the next baby was a girl, and true to his word, the stubborn father named her in honor of the third president of the United States.

Thus, in 1805 the Cameron household numbered two sons rather than three: Archibald and John. And two daughters rather than one: Elizabeth and Thomas Jefferson.

Jeffie, as her family called her, later married Colonel Jacob Blanchard and became the mother of four sons and four daughters. Not surprisingly, Thomas Jefferson Blanchard gave her daughters unmistakably feminine names: Mary, Elizabeth, Jean, and Flora.

Family historians who arrive at inaccurate conclusions based on convincing evidence should take comfort in the knowledge that they are in distinguished company. Noel C. Stevenson, FASG, the deservedly eminent authority on the subject of documenting genealogical evidence, included the following paragraph on page 22 of his definitive volume,

Genealogical Evidence: A Guide to the Standard of Proof Relating to Pedigrees, Ancestry, Heirship and Family History, (Aegean Park Press, 1979).

"The head of a large family of *only girls* [emphasis added] in Vermont told his wife that their soon due baby would be named Thomas Jefferson whether the infant was male or female. The newborn proved to be a girl and Thomas Jefferson is what she was named."

I wrote to Mr. Stevenson pointing out my suspicion that he was referring to the family of Ryegate, Vermont's Judge John Cameron and his wife, Elizabeth. They had two sons, Archibald and John, who were born before Jeffie arrived in the family. Thus the children certainly were not, as he had reported, all girls before Jeffie's arrival in the Cameron clan.

In a gracious reply to my letter, Mr. Stevenson explained that during the course of a conversation with a staff member at the Vermont Historical Society in 1959 he had been informed, erroneously as it turned out, of the circumstances surrounding the naming of Thomas Jefferson Cameron. He concluded his letter with, "Thank you for the discovery. I will correct Jeffie's status in the next edition of the book."

## **Case Three:** Swedish Brothers

All four of my wife's grandparents were born in Sweden. Tracing her ancestry provided me with an interesting and very enlightening education

about the different procedures by which Swedish men who were born to the same two parents might have acquired various surnames.

Irrefutable Facts: My wife's Swedish great-grandmother Katrina Enroot had four legitimate sons who emigrated to northern Maine in the waning years of the nineteenth century. All four of Katrina's sons were enumerated in the 1900 census of Aroostook County, Maine, and each one had a different surname. They were listed in that census as Anders Olafsson, Ulrick Hedstrom, Victor Lindberg, and Lars Lett.

**Reasonable Assumption:** Katrina had been married four times. Her husbands' surnames were Olafsson, Hedstrom, Lindberg, and Lett.

**Not So:** Lutheran church records of Orebro Parish in Sweden reveal that Katrina's only husband and the father of all of her children was Olaf Olsson. Situations in which adult blood brothers might be known by different last names were not at all uncommon in Sweden of the past. As recently as

the very late nineteenth century, adult sons of the same two Swedish parents often changed their surnames.

Katrina's son Anders followed the old Scandinavian custom of opting for the patronymic Olafsson, which announced to the world that he was the son of a man whose Christian name was Olaf. This was the most common method by which a Swedish man acquired a surname but not the only means of doing so. Ulrick Hedstrom selected as his surname the name of the brook that ran through the family farm in Orebro Parish. Similarly, it has been conjectured that Victor Lindberg's choice of surname was based on the name of the family farm in Sweden.

Another common method by which an adult male acquired his last name was through his compulsory military service. Since it was inevitable that each regiment include many soldiers with duplicate patronymics such as Andersson, Larsson, Olsson, and Nilsson, at the time of induction a recruit was issued a military surname of one or two syllables along with his uniform, musket, mess kit, and blanket. As a soldier, Lars, the fourth son of Olaf and Katrina Olofsson, became Lars Lett. And following his discharge from the service, Lars chose to be known by his more singular military surname rather than by his family

that a child named Thomas Jefferson Cameron was a boy. However, further research into the family of John and Elizabeth Cameron raised a warning flag about the gender of their fourth child when it was reported in the History of Rvegate, Vermont by Edward Miller that Thomas Jefferson Cameron married Colonel Jacob Blanchard. Fortunately, Miller explains in the same volume how a daughter was burdened with an unmistakably masculine name. This case vividly illustrates that a family should be studied as thoroughly as possible before forming assumptions about its individual members.

In the third case, it would certainly be logical to assume that four adult men with the same mother, but each with a different surname, were the sons of four different fathers. And other than the fact that one bore a patronymic for a surname and another elected to retain the name he received when faithfully he entered the military service, the family has been unable to discover a logical reaobserving son why the other two brothers chose names related to their home farm in standard rules of Sweden.

Because their sister was my wife's maternal grandmother. who also immigrated to the same small town in Maine, we know that all four of these men with different surnames were brothers. Had a similar naming pattern

occurred a few generations earlier in the ancestral homeland, we never would have known the relationship of these four men.

The first two cases demonstrate that erroneous assumptions may be avoided if time-tested rules governing genealogical research are followed carefully. The patronymic and military names stated in the third case demonstrate that in researching ancestors who came to the United States from other countries, it is important to understand naming customs in those countries. But the third case also reminds us that, short of reliable first-hand knowledge, no matter how closely we follow the rules, there will almost always be those frustrating gaps in our family histories.

Edward F. Holden, a retired educator, is a professional genealogist and the staff genealogist at the New Hampshire State Library. This position gives him the opportunity to combine his enthusiasm for teaching with his interest in the many facets of family history research.

## **you can decrease the likelihood** of forming false conclusions. name.

BV

genealogical research.

## **Additional Discussion**

Most of us who pursue family history have reached assumptions that are proven wrong through further research. However, by faithfully observing standard rules of genealogical research we can decrease the likelihood of forming false conclusions.

In the first case in this article I violated the fundamental rule of beginning the process with your parents and working backward.

Based on my grandmother's undocumented word that she was descended from Humphrey Turner's son John, who married a granddaughter of the Pilgrim leader William Brewster, I began the procedure for applying for membership in the Mayflower Society. But as I researched my line in the proper sequence from my grandmother back to Humphrey and Lydia Turner, I learned that their son John the Younger, who married Ann James, was our ancestor. Neither John the Younger nor his wife Ann could claim ancestors who came to this country on the Mayflower.

In the second case, it is certainly reasonable to assume

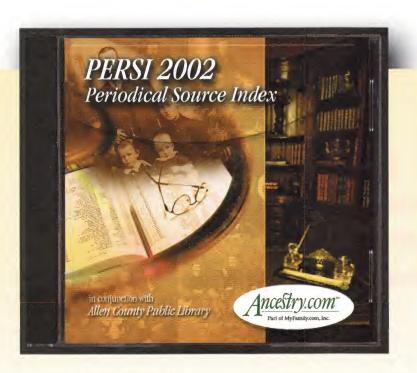
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## Back to Basics

othing brings genealogy to the surface of every-day life like the passing of a loved one. That was exactly our situation this past summer when we each lost a parent within a two-week time span. Fortunately, the love of our families and friends helped us through this painful time.

Our experience was also a reminder that death documentation is one of the important building blocks of genealogical research. In this article, we will examine the basics of gathering family history information from this most fundamental research tool.

## Who kept death records?

Many British and European countries began keeping birth and death records in the nineteenth century. Before then, churches maintained registers of christenings and burials, and colonial settlers in America brought British laws and customs with them. Thus, churches were initially the guardians of vital records, and ministers in many colonies were required by law to report christenings and burials to civil authorities. In time, some colonies, primarily those in New England, passed laws requiring local town or county clerks to maintain records of births and deaths. Not until early in the twentieth century was the registration of births and deaths required by the majority of states.

## Why is it necessary?

Death documentation is necessary for several reasons. It allows health and legal authorities to determine the cause of death in case of infectious disease and to make certain no foul play was responsible. Legal proof of death is also needed in order to settle an estate as well as for pension, probate, insurance, and burial.

## What documents will you find?

While records vary widely through time, location, and detail, some of the



## TERRY AND JIM WILLARD

more common types of death records a researcher will encounter are the death certificate, record of death, death register, and death index.

Death certificate. The death certificate is an actual certified piece of paper with extensive detail regarding the deceased. Since the early twentieth century, a certificate of this type has been required by all states.

Record of death. The record of death is essentially a summarized copy of the original on file at the state level. Copies of this record may be obtained from a variety of sources, for example, from the vital records offices of the state, county, or city in which the death occurred as well as from the health department, state archives, or state historical society.

Death register. Death information was often kept at the county level, at other times in communities, in a large register-style book, especially before 1900. Such entries provided the most basic of information such as name, age, occupation, etc.

Death index. Many states and localities have prepared an index to their death records. Many of these indexes are available online, either through various state archives or at subscription websites like Ancestry.com and others. By looking up an ancestor in such an index, the researcher can then request an official copy of either the certificate or death record.

Regardless of the type of record found, that record will include some or all of the following fields of information. This total listing of data fields was taken from a modern death certificate. Many of these fields are extremely important as they provide links to other sources of potentially useful research data.

### Fields of Data

Name. Four separate fields allow for the detailing of the full name. Sometimes a middle name or a name suffix provides a research clue.

Date of death. This information is important as it provides a concrete

## DEATH RECORDS

## Quick Tips and Facts

- Death records are important for the data they contain and for the links they provide to other sources.
- Death records can be obtained from the relevant state office of vital records or from the appropriate county, city, or town. Consult a good genealogy source book such as *The Source* and *Ancestry's Red Book*, or a general website such as <www.vitalrec.com> for information on where and how to obtain death records.
- There will be a fee for copies of death records.
   If you utilize a Web record search company,
   there will be an additional fee for their service.
- You might have to prove your relationship to the deceased in order to acquire a copy of the death record.
- Quantity of data can be different depending upon the state, county, or town.
- Prior to the Civil War, few states required that deaths be registered.
- Where death records did exist prior to the Civil War, they contained very little information (usually the name, date of death, place of death, cause of death, and place of burial).
- State-required death certificates did not begin until the early twentieth century in most states.
- Early death records (pre-1900) were almost always kept at the town or county level of government.
- Some death records are indexed, making it easier to access the information.
- · Some death indexes are available online.
- Even though the death certificate is a legal document, it is still important that the researcher verifies and corroborates as much of the information as possible. The informant might inadvertently provide inaccurate information.
- Other sources related to death records include obituaries, burial permits, cemetery records, funeral home/undertaker records, transit records (moving a body from county to county or state to state), death returns, funeral cards, coroner's records, probates, necrologies,

time to search for an obituary in a local paper. Obituaries, while not primary source material, can be a goldmine of family information.

Sex.

Social Security Number. Provides a link to Social Security records. For people born after 1880, this might lead the researcher to the original Social Security application.

Age.

**Date of birth.** The obvious link to the birth certificate, another vital record.

**Birthplace.** Provides the probable location of the birth certificate.

Was decedent ever in U.S. armed forces? Military records are an excellent source of genealogical data.

Place of death.

Name of facility (mortuary).

County of death.

City or town of death.

Marital Status. Marriage certificates are yet another type of vital record.

Most recent spouse. Provides the name of the spouse in marriage records to confirm the correct record has been located.

Decedent's usual occupation.

Kind of business/industry.

**Decedent's education.** School records might provide additional family information.

Ancestry. If previously unknown, this can help in forming a research strategy since different ethnic groups present their own unique research problems and techniques.

Race.

Residence state.

**Residence county.** Property ownership records are generally kept at the county level and these records provide data such as when a person may have moved to that county.

Residence city or town. Same as above.

Residence street and number.

Father's information. This information helps prove the link between the decedent and the preceding generation.

Mother's information. Same as above with the added benefit of providing the mother's maiden name, which is a key piece of data in the research process.

**Informant.** This is significant as it gets to the reliability of the information. Who is the informant? How is the informant related to the decedent? How close was the informant to the decedent?

Mailing address of the informant. This might help in that the researcher could possibly write to the informant and discover additional genealogical information.

Method of disposition.

Was body embalmed?

Place, location, and date of disposition. This names the cemetery where the deceased is buried. Some cemetery records, including the headstone, can provide useful clues.

The signature and license number of the funeral practitioner or authorized person.

The name, address, and license number of the funeral home. In some cases, the funeral home maintains information on the deceased relevant to genealogy such as burial cards, burial permits, and cemetery information.

Certifying physician.

Date signed.

Viewed body after death.

Name of attending physician if other than certifier.

Name and address of certifier (Type or Print).

Time of death.

Registrar's signature.

Date filed.

Was an autopsy performed?

Were autopsy findings available prior to completion of cause of death?

Manner of death.

The final portion of the complete

death certificate concerns the cause of death. In some states this is confidential information and is provided only to proven close relatives of the deceased. For genealogists who are tracking a medical pedigree, such information is an important part of their research.

Remember, good genealogical research requires that the researcher start in the present and work back through time, one generation at a time. This approach allows the researcher to hypothesize that one generation is directly connected to the preceding generation. After gathering as much data as possible on (and from) the living family members, the researcher turns to those ancestors who have died most recently. Following this logic, the first significant piece of genealogical evidence the researcher encounters is the death certificate.

The death certificate can be considered both primary and secondary source material. It is primary for the death date, but secondary for birth information and other information that took place earlier in the individual's life. By definition, primary source material consists of official documents recorded by a duly appointed or elected official at or near the actual time the event occurred. Sound genealogical research requires such documentation.

Death is never a particularly pleasant event to deal with. However, the healing power of genealogy can be especially appreciated during such a difficult time. There is comfort in knowing that your loved ones will not be forgotten. 🚱

Terry and Jim Willard hosted the ten-part PBS Ancestors series. They have researched their family history fifteen generations on both sides.

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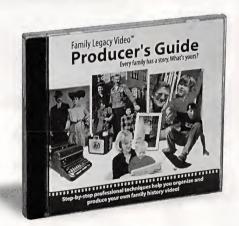
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## Research Cornerstones

ou can find a wealth of information in even the most poorly kept old cemeteries as long as you pay careful attention to their many clues. Those clues come through gravestones and monuments, through their records, even through the placement of graves in relation to each other.

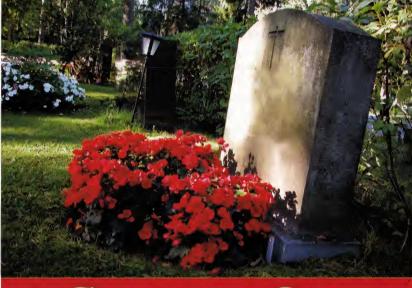
Modern expectations of permanence and the concept of lot ownership is a relatively recent development. Until the mid-nineteenth century, in both Europe and its former American colonies, cemeteries were merely the places to "remember, human, that you are dust, and into dust you will again return."

Burial options were few before the mid-1800s. People were buried in churchyards, in public town or community graveyards, or in family burial lots on their own land. Inscribed stones and markers have been in use for centuries, but their cost initially limited them to the most notable and affluent families, and only within the last two centuries have they become commonplace. Earlier, most families marked burial sites, if at all, only by impermanent wooden markers, or by placing distinctive fieldstones at the head and foot, and the significance of the stones were lost with the passing of those who placed them.

Gravesites in most churchyards, except for the more prestigious ones near the church or within it, were considered neither permanent nor worthy of commemoration, and as is still the practice in European churchyards, bones were often disinterred and stored elsewhere so the site could be made available for new burials.

## THE "NEW" CEMETERY

In the mid-nineteenth century, the rural cemetery movement swept the United States, and its influence later extended to both Europe and the rest of North America. It coincided with the expanding urban populations of



## CLUES IN OLD CEMETERIES BY DONN DEVINE, CG, CGI

the Industrial Revolution and the rapid exhaustion of available space in existing churchyards and public burial grounds. It also reflected the spirit of romanticism and nostalgia that characterized the middle-class culture of the period, emphasizing preservation of the rural landscape and making nature accessible.

The new cemeteries had driveways and paths for accessibility to their landscaping and to individual family plots that were sold in advance. They invited lot owners and the public at large to make cemeteries a destination, picnicking and enjoying other quiet recreation on the family lot or elsewhere within their grounds. Not only did they revolutionize attitudes toward death and burial practices, but by their popularity with the public they gave rise to the public parks movement.

By 1850, most major cities had one or more of the new-style cemeteries. While the prices of lots limited them to the middle and upper classes, the use of deeds with written definitions of burial rights that could be passed on to heirs gave an expectation of permanence that had seldom before been associated with burial places. Cemeteries operated by churches and municipalities, and later by profitmaking enterprises, quickly adopted elements introduced by the rural cemetery movement, including deeds, records of lot ownership, and agreements for perpetual care.

## GRAVESTONES

In older cemeteries, gravestones are often the only source of information on those buried there. Stone, fortunately, is a relatively enduring medium, although weather and vandalism can wreak havoc over time, and the number discovered in use as doorsteps or paving stones far from their original location is disturbing, to say the least.

Widespread efforts are now preventing future loss by recording the information on stones so it can be archived and preserved. Large-scale projects to record all the tombstones within a state or county were undertaken in the 1930s under the Federal Writers Projects, a depression-era activity of the Works Progress Administration. These largely unpublished compilations can often be found in state archives and local historical society collections. Their great value was in recording many inscriptions that have since been lost to the ravages of time and vandalism. Many local genealogical

plots on farms in rural areas, or in the churchyards of long-closed and often demolished churches. While a few are maintained by small, dedicated groups of volunteers, most are soon so overgrown with vegetation that they are unrecognizable as burial places. Among the few exceptions are those acquired by the federal government in assembling land for large military reservations. These are regularly maintained, within budgetary limitations, and provide access to descendants.

As is still the practice in European churchyards, bones were often disinterred and stored elsewhere so the site could be made available for new burials.

societies are currently transcribing and publishing gravestone inscriptions, and the Internet has provided a means for their widespread distribution.

In using gravestones as a genealogical source, keep in mind that while most of them are original records, the information they contain is always secondary, since it is derived from some other source. Some of it, like date of death and name of the person, may have passed through fewer hands than other data, like birth date or place, before being engraved in stone. But as most of us have learned through sad experience, the most recent data is occasionally at odds with more contemporary or accurately kept records.

However, without the gravestone as a guide, we may overlook the doors to other information about the deceased that can be found in newspapers, church or courthouse records, and military and pension files, among others.

As permanent records, gravestones are most at risk in small family burial

## LOCATIONAL INFORMATION

One of our important sources of genealogical information from cemeteries comes from the relationships of individual burial sites to each other, as revealed by multiple names on a single stone or by the data on nearby stones. This information is generally indirect evidence at best, unless a spouse or child is identified as such, but it often gives the basis for a hypothesis about a family group for which we can then search out further evidence to support or disprove it.

After using a gravestone transcription, never pass up a chance to view the original, no matter how reliably it was made. When transcribed cemetery inscriptions preserve the original order, row by row, in which the stones were copied, they retain much of this locational information content, although adjacent locations in different rows aren't always apparent unless a map or sketch plan is included. All too often, however, well-meaning transcribers will rearrange the inscrip-

tions in alphabetical order to make it easier for people to find the ones they're interested in. The accepted way to record gravestone inscriptions is to list the order they are found in the cemetery, row by row, and then to provide an alphabetical index of all the individual names recorded, to make the collection user-friendly.

Some of the relationships to an original lot owner or burial that may produce different surnames in the same family plot, or in adjacent or nearby graves include a remarried widow, a married sister or her husband, a married daughter or her husband, and the children of married daughters. However, there could be other explanations, and we must treat possibilities based on age and location as hypotheses to be tested by additional evidence. Frequently, these nearby graves may be an indication of a female family member's married surname. When transcriptions are rearranged alphabetically, we can't make the association without a visit to the cemetery.

## RECORDS

Before the rural cemetery movement, records were seldom kept other than in a sexton's or caretaker's book, in which payments for burials were recorded. More often than not, they weren't considered permanent records and were discarded once accounts had been settled. Where they have survived, they may name only the person who made the payment, with the person buried described only as parent, spouse, or child, but frequently with some indication of age, like "old," "young," or "infant." For the periods they cover, they are likely to be comprehensive, listing all the burials that took place. For those of our ancestors whose families couldn't afford a gravestone, a sexton's book may be the only contemporary record of death.

Most modern cemeteries create at least three basic records, either on

paper or digitally. The first is a journal, a chronological record of burials, which at a minimum gives the name, date, and location of burial, and usually the age. Other information may include next of kin, date of death, name of funeral director, location of funeral, and cause of death.

The second record, akin to a ledger, shows each lot or plot, its owner, and the location, identity, and date of each burial within the plot.

The third record, frequently termed a deed, is the written statement of the rights the buyer obtains—usually an inheritable right to bury related persons, up to the capacity of the lot, and more recently for perpetual care of the grounds and vegetation. Unlike ordinary deeds, it does not convey any right of ownership or possession. Deeds were usually supplied in bound books, and were frequently numbered.

When a lot was sold, the deed was detached from the bound stub, on which information about the buyer was recorded by the cemetery.

## Non-Cemetery Records

Using the dates, locations, and other information from cemetery records, we may be able to extend our search to newspaper obituaries or death notices, or to records of funeral directors, churches, or fraternal organizations identified in the cemetery records.

Cemetery sources are not as conveniently located or easily searched as many other repositories of genealogical data, but the potential rewards of a thorough search will fully justify the extra effort you put into it.

Donn Devine,  $CG^{\text{w}}$ ,  $CGI^{\text{w}}$ , a genealogical consultant from Wilmington, Delaware, is an attorney for the city

and archivist of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington. He is a former National Genealogical Society board member, currently chairs its Standards Committee, and is a trustee of the Board for Certification of Genealogists.

## FURTHER READING

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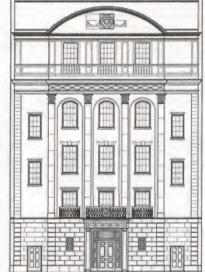
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## Digging Deeper

## Doing the HIStory

## by Curt B. Witcher, MLS, FUGA

horough family history research depends on the ability to find and evaluate all the evidence available to document a particular ancestor and his or her family.

To do this, you need to step outside the normal routine of collecting documents and begin to harvest other important information by exploring the history surrounding an individual and a particular family. This is often referred to as "doing the history."

The first step in really deploying a strategy of "doing the history" involves focusing on *all* the details you can find about a specific ancestor and his or her life. This means taking an intelligent, thorough, reasoned approach to identifying and evaluating every available document that provides new information and a clearer context for an ancestor's life.

## **Step 1: Ask Questions**

To begin establishing a context for an ancestor's life, focus your research on a particular individual and his or her family. One of the best ways to begin such a focused process is to remember the journalist's trade: Ask who, what, where, when, and why. Family historians are fairly good at remembering to ask "when," "who," and "what" questions, and sometimes "where" questions, but they frequently ignore "why."

Who? In seeking an answer to who a particular ancestor is, probing must go much deeper than documenting the name. Determining who an ancestor is should also focus on verifying his or her nationality or ethnicity as well as his or her standing within a particular area or community. We know how important ethnicity is to discovering all the information about an ancestor.

Also important to discovering all the data we can about a potential ancestor is knowing the full range of his or her activities in and contributions to the community. Besides being a farmer, was the individual a road commissioner, an elder at church, a magistrate, an office holder?

To make even a modest attempt to truly find out who a particular ancestor is necessitates a thorough and careful review of the widest collection of historical writing and records. In answering the first of the W questions—who—you begin the fruitful process of exploring and documenting the history.

Where? Another reporter's question that often doesn't receive the careful attention it deserves is "where." Researchers are often content with minimal geographic context. But besides being identified in a county from a census record or a city from a vital record, our ancestors should be identified in the most robust geographic context. In what specific town-



llustration courtesy of Dillon Yuthers

ship or district is an ancestor found? Is he or she living in an ethnic neighborhood or on a farm? Is the farm on the frontier or part of a more settled area? Was it acquired through a land speculator, the government, or as part of a homestead act?

Fully answering the "where" question should involve looking at a range of maps. Finding the town, the neighborhood, or the farm on political, land ownership, and topographical maps can provide interesting and useful data that can be evaluated to determine more information about a particular ancestor.

Topographical maps can provide insights on where people may have attended church, been married, or conducted business. The closest town on a political map may be shown as a most difficult, and hence unlikely, journey on a topographical map. Similarly, frozen or dry canals, flooded streams and rivers, and the existence of a rail line may shed light on the possibility of where people worshiped, bought

and sold goods, and executed official activities. Discovering the locales of those everyday activities will certainly impact where you go to find records.

There are numerous other reasons why the use of maps can be significant to genealogical research. If an individual is living in a predominantly German town, are there other predominantly German towns in the area? Are there maps extant that indicate any connectivity between these ethnically similar areas? What do maps tell us about the relationship between several towns or villages that appear over a couple of generations of family papers and stories?

When my father-in-law started a progressive letter among his siblings

this progressive letter continues to bring clarity to the family's history in the area.

Why? Perhaps the most underutilized of the reporter's questions is "why." Finding an ancestor in a particular place or engaging in a particular activity, and then asking why he is there or why he is engaged in such an activity sounds simplistic. But when it is answered fully, this question can help you be more thorough and find even more evidence.

For instance, an ancestor is found on an 1870 census. Besides accurately recording the data from the census document, ask why he is there. Was he born there? If so, when? Did he migrate there? If so, when and what

A true picture of our ancestors can only be constructed through detailed evaluation of every aspect of their lives.

in the early 1990s, he obtained more than fifty pages about the family's early 1900s life in Lee and Owsley counties, Kentucky. One of the more interesting things about the letter was the number of small settlements that were identified—many of which aren't on road maps or atlases.

We learned of Wild Dog Creek, Upper and Lower Stinking Creeks, and Dry Fork, as well as Earnestville, Heidelberg, and Farmers Ridge. By locating these places on detailed maps, it became easy to see the relationships between the places and how the family once traveled among them. Mapping prompted the migration? Did he come seeking new land to farm? Was he an early settler, pioneer, or homesteader? Did he come to work on the railroad? Interesting data can be discovered and consequential contexts can be established when you continually seek the fullest answers to a wide range of "why" questions. A true picture of our ancestors can only be constructed through detailed evaluation of every aspect of their lives.

Focusing on all the details of a particular ancestor's life and asking the right questions means that you will be focusing analytical attention on each document you find. This analytical attention will assist you in finding the totality of documents available. Keeping a documents checklist can be helpful in ensuring that every reasonable effort has been made to find all documents that evidence a particular person's life. *The Source* (Ancestry, 1997) contains a couple of excellent document lists to use so you can be as thorough as possible.

## **Step 2: Identify Ethnic** and Historical Context

The first step of focusing on all the details of an ancestor's life and all the documents that evidence that life is nicely complemented by the second step: evaluating all the contexts of an ancestor and his or her family. Identifying ethnic, religious, occupational, and historical or period contexts is critical in uncovering the maximum amount of information about an ancestral family.

Knowing that like ethnic groups tended to migrate together, settle together, and move again as a group will assist you in engaging in nearby research and locating ethnically oriented organizations and publications. Knowing why an ancestor is where he is and why he is engaged in particular activities greatly assists in building context, and creating appropriate contexts is crucial to successful family history research.

## **Step 3:** Access the Histories

A third vital step in "doing the history" is identifying and studying all the geographic histories in the areas where your ancestors lived. The importance of this step cannot be emphasized enough. In fact, this step supports and validates the first two steps. Town and county histories, church and denominational histories, business histories, trade or occupational histories, and ethnic histories that are geographically oriented must

be critically evaluated for information that will lead to more data sources detailing your ancestors' lives. Often, exploration of general histories leads to knowledge of lesser-known, more specific, historical works. Indeed, knowing the in-depth history of the area will highlight more of the lesser-known sources and record types that might be extant. And doing an in-depth study of the history of an area typically means that the all-too-frequent research patterns of perusing indexes and only exploring surname citations in town and county histories must be greatly modified.

In the pages of general histories, you may find references to all kinds of unique sources. Check notes and bibliographic references for clues to small newspapers, perhaps even ethnic and religious serials. References to local laws and codes, diaries and daybooks, special gazetteers and directories, and business and company records may all be noted in general histories. Like any exciting detective work, evidence gathered during one part of a genealogical research process will likely lead to greater quantities of data and greater specific information for continued exploration.

General histories are fairly easy not only to find but also to obtain. The online catalogs of major research libraries such as the Family History Library, the Library of Congress, the Allen County Public Library in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, the DAR Library in Washington, D.C., and the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston can all be searched by geographic location.

Increasing numbers of general histories are available online—both newly researched materials and digitized copies of classic works. The websites of local public libraries as well as state libraries and state historical societies should be places of exploration.

Taking the time to "do the history" will help you solve many of your family mysteries. It is clear that doing genealogy is doing history! ?

Curt B. Witcher, MLS, FUGA, is the president of the National Genealogical Society and the manager of the historical genealogy department for the Allen County Public Library. He is also a popular genealogical lecturer.



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CHECK BACK OFTEN!

enealogists approach the Internet in a schizophrenic manner. Their trusting, giving side wants to share their contact information with every potential cousin on the Internet in hopes of furthering their research. But their paranoid, been-burned-before side wants to protect themselves from spammers, fraudsters, and distant relatives asking for money.

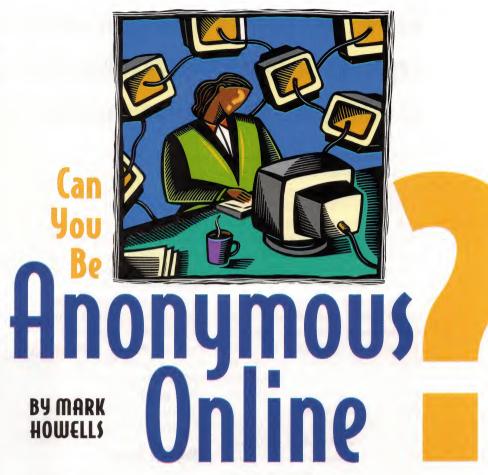
Family historians must listen to both of these little voices in their head to balance their need for contact with their need for privacy.

## Why Share?

Consider for a moment why we research our ancestry. Reasons abound: personal fulfillment, religious conviction, curiosity, understanding one's place in history, membership in a lineage society, school project, family health considerations, meeting previously unknown family members, and simply being nosy about family relationships. The reasons are as diverse as the genealogists themselves.

Even if family historians were not motivated to meet new family members, they are still dependent on other people to conduct research. For instance, on any given visit to the library, chances are that you will ask questions of the librarian regarding the library's holdings and how to access them. Your interest in genealogy will no doubt come out and it's likely that you will share the particulars of your research with the librarian in order to assist the research process. Your use of the library would not be as effective if you did not share some of your previous research with the librarian assisting you. If you are a card holder at the library, the library probably has your name, address, and telephone number on file.

Considering that the librarian could now potentially violate your privacy with what he or she knows of your research and your contact information,



did you make a mistake by involving the librarian in your research? Was the trade-off between more efficient use of the library and revealing something about yourself and your personal information worthwhile?

The same is true on the Internet. Researchers have to share their contact information if they expect anyone to contact them regarding their questions, answers, or other posts on genealogy mailing lists. Similarly, our genealogy webpages need to display what we know about our ancestors as well as how visitors can contact us. Your direct e-mail to fellow researchers needs to include your research interests and the best way to contact you. Researchers simply cannot be successful in genealogical research on the Internet if they refuse to share personal information.

## What to Share?

Signing messages as "Fluff-N-Stuff" or "GenGal" may be cute in a chat room for teenagers, but genealogists need to know who they're talking to. Would you introduce yourself at your local genealogical society's meetings by your nickname, CB radio handle, or nom de plume? Please have the courtesy to give your name. We will certainly take you and your research more seriously if you do.

Including your e-mail address in your Internet communications is the most basic information you should provide to fellow researchers. It should be in the body of your e-mails (just in case the body of the message gets separated from its headers due to copying, forwarding, or printing). And you should share it with every post you make to a mailing list or message

## Researchers have to share their contact information if they expect to be contacted regarding their questions, answers, or other posts on genealogy mailing lists.

board. Similarly, your e-mail address should appear on every page of your genealogy website. Don't forget to include your e-mail address on your snail mail correspondence as well. You might get a reply to a traditionally posted letter faster via e-mail if you let your pen pals know that you also have an e-mail account.

The problem with relying on your e-mail address alone for your contact information is that e-mail addresses change very frequently. To ensure future contact with others who are interested in your research, you need to share something more permanent than your e-mail address.

In addition to an e-mail address, serious genealogists share their mailing address, perhaps even their phone number, or other permanent contact information with other researchers. Some researchers do not have e-mail or Internet connectivity. If someone with Internet access sees your research interests, prints out your information, and gives it to someone else who is interested in the same surnames but does not have e-mail, how is that fellow researcher supposed to contact you? What if your e-mail address changes? How will those who read your old messages in mailing list archives or on message boards reach you? Sharing e-mail is a good first step, but it is not sufficient to ensure future and ongoing contact.

While sharing contact information is important, it is obviously secondary to the research information we want to share. Sharing only your surnames of interest is not enough to stimulate good responses. Providing surnames, places where these ancestors lived, and dates of interest are critical to successful genealogical communication. You might be interested in the Smith surname, but if this is all you share with your correspondents, you will be

forced to wade through a lot of non-related inquiries. If instead

you tell others that you are researching the Smiths of Smithville from 1795 to 1833, you stand a much greater chance of receiving a specific and successful response.

## Why Not Share?

Privacy is the number one reason cited by Internet users for

attempting to stay anonymous and for not sharing contact information online. Most of us are not comfortable sharing our telephone numbers and postal addresses with strangers.

However, if your name, address, and phone number have ever appeared in a telephone directory over the past decade, this information is already publicly available on the Internet via one of numerous telephone directory websites (see Cyndi's List – Finding People at <www.cyndislist.com/finding.htm#Telephone>. Have you ever bought, sold, or paid taxes on land? Your contact information is also likely to be on the Internet as a result. Do you think that giving out your phone number but not your snail mail address keeps your street address

private? Go to
Google.com and
type in your personal phone number
with area code first. If
your name and street
address do not come up,
try a friend's phone number instead. Using an

already public example, entering "703 525 0050" will give you the

name and address of the National Genealogical Society in Arlington, Virginia. Google is just one of many reverse lookup services that renders futile attempts to keep a snail mail address private. Even your birth date is probably out on the Internet (try <a href="https://anybirthday.com">https://anybirthday.com</a>).

If you have managed to live unlisted until now, avoided sharing information with local, state or federal governments, and never provided your name, address, and telephone number to commercial entities, you probably do still have some privacy left to protect. Otherwise, the cat is already out of the bag to the world at large about who you are, when you were born, where you live, and how to reach you. This probably doesn't provide much comfort regarding personal privacy—it's not meant to. If you really need to retain some of your privacy, get a post office box and use it consistently when sharing your personal information. Otherwise, you've probably already gone public even if you never intended to.



Some family historians do not care to share the results of their research. The reasoning is that since they spent so much time and effort on their ancestors, they don't want strangers to simply lift their research off of a website, an e-mail, or another form of communication. Sharing basic genealogical information of names, relationships, and dates should be done without concern. It would be nice if no one in our community ever took someone else's research and called it their own. Unfortunately, we do not all play by the same set of rules.

Family historians should share names, relationships, and dates freely but withhold source citations for this information when sharing research results publicly. Names, dates, and places shorn of their sources devalues genealogical information, so let the surname rustlers have them—they're mythology without proper source citations anyway. Tell your correspondents that your sources are available upon request so you can have more control over who receives the proofs of your hard work.

## What Not to Share

Sharing your real name, your e-mail address, and your surname interests are a bare minimum for any genealogical communication. The addition of permanent contact information and research interest locations and dates makes such communications complete. Now what should not be shared?

Do not share information about living persons such as name, birth date, mother's maiden name, social security number, or contact information. People have the right to make their own decisions about whether they wish to share this information with the world. It is not our place to make this decision for them, even for the benefit of our research. Even though the people's particulars may

already be public as described earlier, it is not proper to share their information without explicit permission. Sharing information only about dead persons is a good first step to protecting the privacy of others.

My own rule of thumb is to only share information from my research on those family members who are two generations from the oldest living generation. My great aunt is my oldest living relative so I restrict myself to sharing information on my great-great-grandparents' (her generation grandparents) Making information public about my great-grandparents (her parents) would provide my great aunt's maiden name. As this is often used as secondary identification for access to bank accounts and other purposes, it is not something I should share with the world.

## Share and Share Alike

Family historians have to share. We can't succeed in our research if we behave like solitary oysters, trying to keep our pearls to ourselves. If we don't tell each other where we can find each other in the oyster bed, we're not likely to make efficient progress in our research either.

Each of us has a personal balance of comfort between sharing our information and valuing our privacy. The advent of the Internet has affected that balance and we need to be realistic about what privacy we can legitimately expect to protect. We are much more "findable" now by more people than ever before. This doesn't mean that we have to unduly expose our particulars to strangers, it just requires that each of us find the right balance between privacy and sharing. §

Mark Howells hides under a rock at markhow@oz.net.

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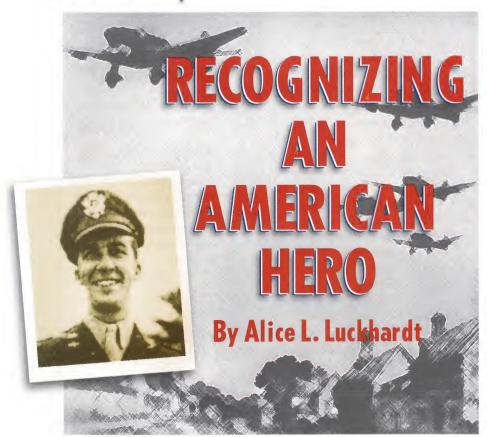
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## Case Study



n 21 February 1945, an American fighter plane crashed down in the English country-side. Over the past five years, the little village of North Stifford in Essex had been no stranger to German, English, and American planes flying overhead. But this time a plane had fallen from the sky.

Thirteen-year-old Ken Rydings was attending school when the screech of the plane caught his attention. The next moment he heard an immense explosion. Ken didn't know until later that day how close the plane had come to his neighborhood. It had crashed only 200 yards away from a primary school filled with young children.

Ken's cousin, who was home on leave from the British Air Force, was one of the first people to reach the crash site. He quickly realized that the pilot, who had maneuvered the plane to ensure that it wouldn't crash into any buildings, did not survive.

The young American pilot, who served with the 55th Fighter Group of the 8th Army Air Force, was Second Lieutenant Samuel E. Kershaw.

When the war ended later that year, Ken and his family began to rebuild their lives. Ken finished school, began a career, married, and settled in the area. The site of the crash remained an open field for decades.

In the early 1990s, developers began making plans to create an enormous housing complex that would cover many acres of the crash site. The development was to be called Chafford Hundred.

As Ken watched the housing project grow, his thoughts went back to February 1945 and the American pilot who died there. He felt that something should be done to honor him.

Ken convinced the developers of Chafford Hundred to name a major street in Lieutenant Kershaw's honor; he got formal approval in 1998, but

Ken Rydings, age fourteen

now he needed to gather personal information on Lieutenant Kershaw and his family. As the weeks went by, it seemed to be an impossible task. He wrote to and spoke with various British institutions and organizations, and even contacted the U.S. embassy and veterans organizations with no success.

One day, Ken was reading the Manchester Genealogical Magazine when the surname Kershaw caught his attention. It is a common name in west central England, but the inquiry was from an American woman in Stuart, Florida.

I was the woman who submitted the query in the *Manchester Genealogical Magazine*; my maiden name is Kershaw. I received a letter from Ken postmarked England on 7 September 1998. Upon reading his letter, I was touched by his determination to recognize this American pilot for his personal sacrifice.

Ken stated in his letter, "I started out on my quest knowing only that a crash did occur, it has taken me so long to establish and verify certain facts, ... what in fact is proving most difficult of all is to obtain some form of personal profile of Samuel E. Kershaw."

I knew all my Kershaw family members in the United States from the World War II era and Lieutenant Kershaw was not a relative. But I had experience putting queries on the Internet and had achieved great



success, so I wrote back to Ken and offered my assistance. I explained what I could do using the Internet, and suggested that we correspond via e-mail.

I submitted a query to GenForum under the surname Kershaw. Next, since I had used the National Personnel Records Center of Military Personnel in St. Louis, Missouri, in my own research, I submitted a written request for the military records of Samuel E. Kershaw. Ken had located Samuel's military service number, so I included it with my request. Months passed without new information for the Samuel Kershaw we were researching. Ken and I corresponded via e-mail every few weeks.

Finally in January 1999, I received a response from the St. Louis Military Records department. The envelope

contained a letter and copies of the Master Index Card with the names of three Samuel Kershaws. One of the three had died on 21 February 1945-a match to the crash date. The letter stated that many military records were lost in a fire in St. Louis back in 1973. This copy of the Master Index Card and some payroll sheets were the only records available on Lieutenant Kershaw. Luckily, his hometown of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and his birth date of 6 February 1922 were listed on the documents. I emailed Ken right away with the results.

Ken wrote back: "I commented to my wife that surely somewhere in the U.S.A. someone knew and loved him. Now I can at least say where he lived, how old he was, etc. to the developers of the housing

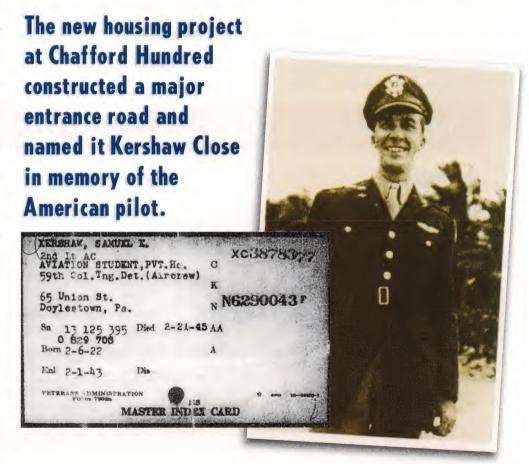
project.... I will register this site with the Imperial War Museum to Samuel E. Kershaw, so come what may, he will take a place in the historical records of the war."

We still didn't have specifics on Samuel's family so I decided to search the Internet for Kershaws in Doylestown. I was hoping that a family member might live in the small Pennsylvania town after all these years. I typed in the name Kershaw and the location of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, at Switchboard.com and was rewarded with one hit—a Ms. Mary Lou F. Kershaw.

I sent her a letter the next day, explaining the story of the American pilot in England and how Ken Rydings was looking for family members. Within a week, a letter arrived from Mary. She wrote that her ex-

husband, Roy P. Kershaw, was the younger brother of Samuel. She stated that Samuel also had a sister named Florence who now lived in South Carolina and that Roy was retired and living in North Carolina. Samuel's parents, Sam and Mary Kershaw, were now deceased. Roy had told her how the family had been very grief stricken on hearing of Samuel's death in 1945. She included Roy's mailing address, so I sent a letter to him right away. I also sent an e-mail to Ken who was overjoyed to finally learn of the family of Lieutenant Samuel E. Kershaw.

Within a few days, I received an email message from Roy Kershaw. He told me that he and his sister Florence were grateful that we cared enough about their brother to locate his family. I let Roy know Ken's e-mail address and they started corresponding with



each other, sharing information about Samuel and the efforts in the village of North Stifford to honor him.

We learned from Roy that Samuel's family had originally been told that the plane had crashed due to a problem with the oxygen supply. But Ken learned through his research of later military accident reports that metal fatigue had caused the left wing to break away and bring the plane down.

Samuel's body was sent back to Pennsylvania and he was buried at the American Legion Cemetery in Doylestown. The town had renamed a street in 1945 in honor of their fallen hometown boy. Samuel had left behind a wife, Winnie Ward, but the couple had no children. Roy also sent a photograph to Ken of his brother in his military uniform.

The new housing project at Chafford Hundred constructed a major entrance road and named it Kershaw Close in memory of the American pilot. Ken also worked to see that a memorial plaque was erected on the street so future generations would

know what had happened on that English soil so many years before.

On 3 September 1999, a ceremony was held at Chafford Hundred with Ken Rydings as the guest of honor. He unveiled the plaque before the press, friends, and family. The date also marked the sixtieth anniversary of Britain's entry into World War II. The plaque and the road were dedicated to Lt. Kershaw's memory for his ultimate sacrifice. The plaque reads:

This close is named in memory of 2nd Lt. Samuel E. Kershaw who served with the 55th fighter group of the 8th U.S. Army Air Force and whose plane crashed on this site during World War II.

Born the 6th of February 1922 Doylestown, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Died 21st of February 1945 North Stifford Essex Remembered

A few months later, in December 1999, Roy Kershaw stopped in Stuart,

Florida, to meet me. And in March 2000, Ken Rydings traveled from England to the United States. During his visit in Stuart, I arranged for one of the local newspapers to interview Ken so that his many years of research would be recognized in print in the United States. Ken also traveled to North Carolina to meet Roy.

The experience turned out to be a most unusual family research project. But Ken and I were both grateful for the opportunity to not only bring families together but to assist in the worthy recognition of a fallen American military hero.

Alice L. Luckhardt graduated from Florida State University with a degree in social science education. Combining her love of family history with her love of American history, she has written much of her family's history into story form.

Note: This story first appeared in Megan Smolenyak's *In Search of Our Ancestors: 101 Inspiring Stories* (Adams Media Corp., 2000). —eds

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## The China Cup Tradition

by Treva Carol Tindol

Have you ever noticed that it's often the cups and saucers that are missing in old sets of china? I have come to believe that there could be a message in those missing pieces. Maybe our ancestors who cherished these delicate cups understood something we haven't quite figured out.

Our family's china cup tradition began more than fifty years ago when I was a child, and my mom's cousin would visit our house. Several times a year, cousin Vesta and her husband would spend one night at our home, then continue their travels the next morning. The one thing we all remembered about Vesta's visits was her china cup. According to Vesta, morning coffee just wasn't good unless it was sipped from a china cup. She always brought one with her so she could enjoy her morning routine.

My mom decided that if morning coffee was better from a china cup, then evening coffee should also be better from a china cup. She began inviting her evening guests to the living room for coffee served in her good china cups. Mom's visitors always seemed to enjoy the practice so she continued it, and the seeds of the china cup tradition were planted.

When Mom grew older she came to live with my husband and me. Knowing that Mom loved beautiful cups, my husband purchased a lovely pedestal china cup for her in an antique shop. She was delighted with her new cup, and she considered it quite a treasure during the years she lived with us. Mom died at the age of ninety-three, but her special china cup maintains its place of honor in our home. When I see Mom's cup, I remember the times when she and I sat together, sipping coffee from our

china cups.

Mom's tradition of serving coffee from the good china has become the accepted method of entertaining in my home. I have acquired a beautifully decorated, delicately thin set of Limoges cups and saucers and an elegant silver coffee service from which my husband and I serve our guests. It's a pleasure to retire to the "parlor" for coffee and conversation, with a touch of soft music in the background, and enjoy a relaxing evening with good friends.

My daughter is the third generation of our family to uphold the china cup tradition. Her assortment of cups has grown over the years and is now almost as extensive as my own collection. When we visit each other, we enjoy our morning coffee together, sipping from our delicate china cups. With mostly milk and a little coffee, my granddaughter joins our tradition now. Soon, she will be ready for a china cup of her own. I cherish these times to relax and reminisce with my family; such opportunities are fleeting, and they simply don't come often enough.

It's never too late to establish your own china cup tradition. Find a favorite container, fill it with a pleasing brew, and invite a friend or family member to share

it. The seeds will be planted. After several generations, descendants may again wonder why there are missing cups and saucers in the old set of china. If they look closely, they may discover memories of treasured times spent together in the china cup tradition.

I see the mystery of the missing cups and saucers as a metaphor for our own lives. Time spent together in the china cup tradition is much more important than the kind of cup that is used. A large, heavy mug could do just as well as a delicate china cup. The contents of the container are also of little significance. The one critical ingredient is the time that is whittled from our busy schedules so that we may sit, relax, and enjoy a few peaceful minutes in the day.

Perhaps the missing pieces of china are a reminder from our ancestors that we need to make time for others and for ourselves. If we don't find time to spend with our family and loved ones, we will one day search for happy memories and we will realize that, like the elusive teacups and saucers of our grandparents' time, these memories are nowhere to be found. We need to seek out opportunities to take a few moments with a cherished friend, a family member, or even by ourselves. These moments, scattered throughout our lives, help us to maintain our grasp on the important things that might otherwise slip through our fingers. Q

Treva Carol Tindol is a retired school counselor from Bowie, Texas. Along with her genealogy research, which led to a visit to her ancestral home in Scotland, she has authored poems, plays, and short stories.

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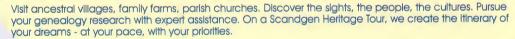












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